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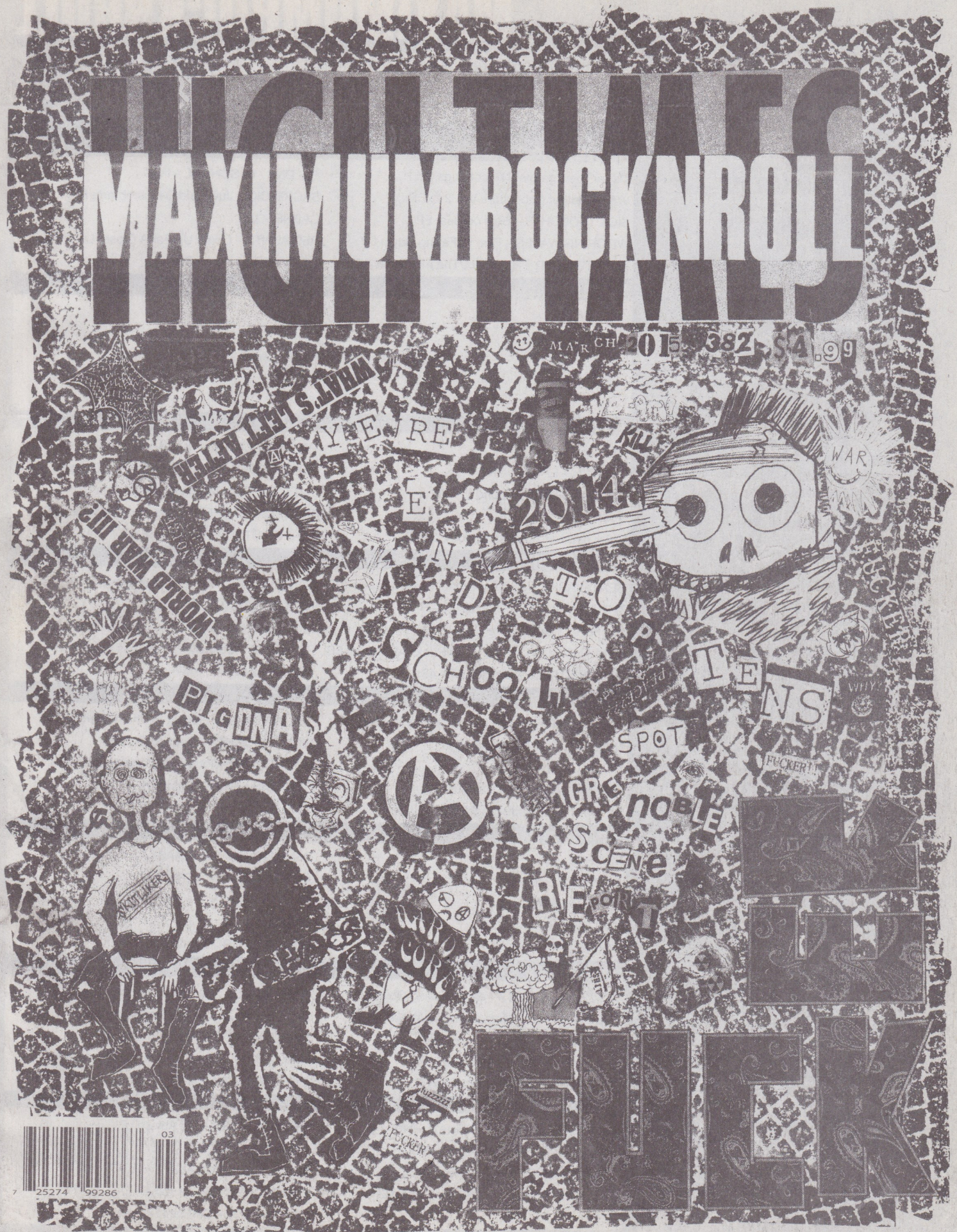

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For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TOP 10

GRACE AMBROSE

- TNT – The Complete Recordings 2xLP
- V/A – Another Subculture Vol. 2 2xCS
- SICK THOUGHTS – Beat on Beat EP
- WITCHING WAVES – Fear of Falling Down LP
- THE INTENDED – Huguenot/The Alchemist 45
- PIG DNA / IN SCHOOL – live
- SACRIFICIO – Juventud Descerebrada EP
- CARNE – 12"
- RED AUNTS – Come Up For A Closer Look 2xLP
- SILENT ERA – demo CS

LYDIA ATHANASOPOULOU

Eating feta in Malaka Land!

MATT BADENHOP

- CARNE – 12"
- MIETTIIN – EP-äpyhä EP
- BETON COMBO – Sound LTD EP
- S.L.A.R.V. – demo CS
- V/A – Another Subculture Vol. 2 2xCS
- PERMACULTURE – They Advance EP
- BOYS ORDER – Tomorrow Dancing/Danger!... 45
- TNT – The Complete Recordings 2xLP
- SYSTEMATIC DEATH – The Moon Watches LP
- EVAPORATED BRAIN – demo CS

WILL BLOMQUIST

- SEX DWARF – Non-Stop Erotic Noise Cabaret 12"
- THE NEW FLESH – The Absurd LP
- SVFFER – Lies We Live LP
- TOM AND BOOT BOYS – Old Punk Generation EP
- RADIOACTIVITY – Danger/Why 45
- CARNE – 12" / LIFE – Proof of Survival EP
- NARCOLEPTICS – Victims EP
- EKOLALIA – Si Loke Kieren Es Una Guerra EP
- PARANOID – Destroy Future Less System EP
- ORDEN MUNDIAL – live

MITCH CARDWELL

- ICKY BOYFRIENDS – Live in San Francisco LP
- DIALS – School Girl/Nervous EP
- DICTATORS NYC – live
- GG KING – Unending Darkness LP
- EX-CULT – Cigarette Machine LP
- THE INTENDED – Huguenot/The Alchemist 45
- SICK THOUGHTS – Beat on Beat EP
- BOYS ORDER – Tomorrow Dancing/Danger!... 45
- PAMPERS – Right Tonight EP
- TIME FLYS – live

ROBERT COLLINS

- MUERTE – live
- CADENAXO – live
- TERCER MUNDO – live
- GAS CHAMBER – LP
- DON PEDRO – live
- DEMOLITION – CD / VAASKA – live
- AMYGDALA – live + EP
- CRIATURAS – live
- ANTI-SEX – live
- PLEASURE CROSS – LP

LAYLA GIBBON

- WITCHING WAVES – Fear of Falling Down LP
- THE INTENDED – Huguenot/The Alchemist 45
- TNT – The Complete Recordings 2xLP
- EX-CULT – Cigarette Machine LP
- GG KING – Unending Darkness LP
- WIREHEADS – The Late Great LP
- SACRIFICIO – Juventud Descerebrada EP
- SICK THOUGHTS – Beat on Beat EP
- RED AUNTS – Come Up For A Closer Look 2xLP
- ENDLESS BUMMER – LP

DAN GOETZ

- DRY HEAVES – Monotony/Killers in Uniform 45
- PERMACULTURE – They Advance EP
- NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS – Recovery LP
- PARANOID – Destroy Future Less System EP
- DIESEL DUDES – live
- THE NEW FLESH – The Absurd LP
- CATHOLIC GUILT – LP
- MYSTERIOUS SKIN – live
- BAD DADDIES – side of split EP
- WAR EMBLEM – Constant Defeat LP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl, CD-only, or demo releases to the address on the previous page

GREG HARVESTER

- BAD DADDIES / HARD LEFT – split EP
- CATHOLIC GUILT – LP
- RADIOACTIVITY – Danger/Why 45
- TOM AND BOOT BOYS – Old Punk Generation EP
- PERMACULTURE – They Advance EP
- APPLESEEDS / STRANGE MATTER – split EP
- THE NEW FLESH – The Absurd LP
- GAS CHAMBER – Hemorrhaging Light LP
- ICKY BOYFRIENDS – Live in San Francisco LP
- DEAD MOON – live

KENNY KAOS

- THE SEX RAYS – She Thing/He's Trying to Work...45
- SKATE GANG – Freya Police LP
- THEE MARVIN GAYS – Sleeping Nights LP
- THEE GOOCHI BOIZ – Fast Food for the... LP
- DIALS – School Girl/Nervous 45
- NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS – Recovery LP
- SUGAR STEMS – Only Come Out at Night LP
- SICKS – Pretty Plastic/Dose 45
- STEVE ADAMYK BAND – LP
- TNT – The Complete Recordings 2xLP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- ICKY BOYFRIENDS – Live in San Francisco LP
- RED AUNTS – Come Up For A Closer Look 2xLP
- BAD DADDIES / HARD LEFT – split EP
- DEAD GHOSTS / SKEPTICS – split 45
- PAMPERS – Right Tonight EP
- NEIGHORHOOD BRATS – Recovery LP
- ARNDALES – Padded Posts/Regional Treasure 45
- THE INTENDED – Huguenot/The Alchemist 45
- TNT – The Complete Recordings 2xLP
- TY SEGALL BAND – Live in San Francisco LP

RAY LUJAN

- BAD DADDIES / HARD LEFT – split EP
- BOYS ORDER – Tomorrow Dancing/Danger!...45
- CANCERS – Fatten the Leeches 12"
- CITY SAINTS – Go and Die CD / MURMURS – LP
- NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS – LP
- PRINCE – In the Living Room EP
- RADIOACTIVITY – Danger/Why 45
- THE YOUNG ROCHELLES – Know the Code EP
- DICTATORS NYC – live
- BARB WIRE DOLLS – live / ANTI-FLAG – live

FRED SCHRUNK

- TNT – The Complete Recordings 2xLP
- EKOLALIA – Si Loke Kieren Es Una Guerra EP
- BAD DADDIES / HARD LEFT – split EP
- PRINCE – In the Living Room EP
- RADIOACTIVITY – Danger/Why 45
- CARNE – 12"
- SONIC AVENUES – LP
- RED AUNTS – Come Up For A Closer Look 2xLP
- NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS – Recovery LP
- EX-CULT – Cigarette Machine LP

MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

- SICK THOUGHTS – Beat on Beat EP
- TNT – The Complete Recordings 2xLP
- PARANOID – Destroy Future Less System EP
- CAUSTIC DEFIANCE – Controlled Aggression EP
- LIFE – Proof of Survival EP
- NARCOLEPTICS – Victims EP
- MERCY KILLINGS – EP
- EX-CULT – Cigarette Machine LP
- SEX DWARF – Non-Stop Erotic Noise Cabaret 12"
- HASSLER – Fed, Worked and Watered LP

ELI WALD (NEW TOP TENNER!)

New Distro Coord! Top Ten coming next month!

ZINE TOP TEN

- *Annihilation of Artworks*
- *Charge #10*
- *Droppings #2*
- *Dynamite Hemorrhage #2*
- *Freedom Isn't Safe & Safety Isn't Free*
- *Greix #4*
- *Icon Factory #1*
- *Infinite Riff #1*
- *I Remember Halloween*
- *Suspect Device #56*

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#186/November '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#188/January '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/February '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/March '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#195/August '99. Moral Crux, RCs, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#197/October '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GCs, GOre Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#234/Novomber '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235 December '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war Scene Reports. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in IRaq," "Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/January '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, Artcore, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/March '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/April '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, Snakepit zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Mortícia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, Trust zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, Portland, Boston & Germany Scene Reports.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04. The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, Boss Martians, Reactionary 3, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, 1 Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech and New Zealand scene reports.

#268/Sept. '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, Baboon of Sickness zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest, Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjertestop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

#282/November '06. The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, Trust fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City & North Carolina scene reports.

#283/December '06. Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

#284/January '07. Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Plovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

#285/February '07. Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys & the early Texas punk scene, Lemuria, Ruin, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Plovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

#286/March '07. Best of 2006, Smartut Kahol Lavan, Electric Kisses, Holy Shit!, Lost Cherrees Pt 1, Go!, Kraljevo, Serbia, and Bakersfield, CA scene reports.

#287/April '07. Alicja Trout, Keith Rosson (Avow zine), Crap Corps, The Vicious, Scum System Kill, Lost Cherrees Pt 2, Restless Youth, SBV, Australia, Kyiv, Ukraine, and Pittsburgh, PA scene reports.

#288/May '07. Clockcleaner, Pisschrist, The Rats (Sweden), Conflict (US), The Viletones, Violent Tumor, Czech Republic and East Texas scene reports.

#289/June '07. Ultimo Resorte, Kursk, Masstrauma, Social Circkle, Final Approach, Post Punk Kitchen, Southern Death Cult, Portland Drummers, Timisoara, Copenhagen, and Pampanga scene reports.

#290/July '07. Stormcrow, Merkit, Solid Decline, Monster Squad, Sex Vid, Vivisick, Warkrime, Top Ten, We're Gonna Fight zine, White Cross, Berlin scene report.

#291/August '07. MRR 25th Anniversary Issue. Martin Sprouse, Tim Yohannon, No Slogan, Ruidosa Inmundicia, Chinese Telephones, Vaseline Children, Anti-System, Dave Roche, 6-page retrospective photo-spread, Kawakami/ Disclose obituary, Brazil scene report.

#292/September '07. New Bloods, Chronic Seizure, Outraged, Geriatric Unit, Active Distribution, Gruk, The Mods, No Defences, The Fakes, Trashies Tour Report, Mexico scene report.

#293/October '07. Punk and Immigration Theme issue w/ interviews, articles, and stories. Anti-You, Loser Life, Political Asylum, Olympia scene report.

#294/November '07. The Hipshakes, Neverending Party, Punk & Immigration article, Finally Punk, La Lucha Para La Justicia en Guatemala, Leftover Crack, AOA.

#295/December '07. Surrender, What If Gods Lie?, the Crawlers, 2:20, The Joneses, Libertario Magazine, Bad Samaritans, Shrapnel, Untermensch.

#297/February '08. Marie Kanger-Born, Thrillhouse Records, Contaminators, Oi Polloi, Obstruction, I Walk the Line, Utopia

#298/March '08. Best of 2007, Autistic Youth, White Lung, Karma Sutra, Clusterfuck, Sharon Cheslow, Slaughter of the Innocent.

#299/April '08. Government Warning, Age, Off With Their Heads, Guided Cradle, Go It Alone, Fy Fan, Daily Void, Hungarian Scene history.

#301/June '08. Underground Railroad to Candyland, Straightjacket Nation, Red Dons, Spectres, Dean Dirg, Kola, Los Violadores, the Sears, Tentacles of Destruction, Antibodies, Head on Collision.

#302/July '08. Giuda, Wasted Time, Reality, Sin Orden, Teenage Head, Antidote, La Urss, Canadian Rifle, Seasick, Israel & Japan scenes.

#303/August '08. Double Negative, Burnt Cross, Masapunk, Chicago Clitfest, Intifada, Nuclear Death Terror, Raw Power, Unlovables, Waste, Chaos in Tejas photospread, Houston and Grand Rapids scene reports.

#304/September '08. Raymond Pettibon, John Stabb of Government Issue, Cola Freaks, Measure [sa], The Press, XYX, Simply Saucer, Kulturkampf, Andy T, FPO, and Columbia scene report.

#305/October '08. Pierced Arrows, Bum Kon, Deep Sleep, Diente Perro, IRA, Legion of Parasites, Reality Control, Riot City Records, Stations, Test Patterns.

#306/November '08. Brain Handle, Assassins, Diodes (pt. 1), 97 Shiki, Black Dove, No Bunny, Shellshag, Sista Sekunden, Vivian Girls, Animals And Men.

#308/January '09. Punks & Film Special with Target Video, Whatever Happened To Susan Jane, Cleveland's Screaming, Mondo Vision, After the Salad Days, You Weren't There, Botinada, Taqwacores, and more.

#309/February '09. Ooga Boogas,Mind Eraser, Cococoma, Extortion, Boyracer, Nixe, Mr. California, Deathcage, Squalora, Maniax, Null and Void, Think Fast.

#310/March '09. 2008 Year-end Top Tens. Health Issue Special--Interviews with Mikey Mind, Chris Colohan and Craig Lewis, plus tons of articles.

#311/April '09. Print Media special with Erick Lyle (Scam zine), Shit-Fi, Z-Gun, Terminal Boredom, Tales Of Blarg, John Holmstrom (Punk magazine), History of skate zines, Punk flyer art, and a dozen one-page fanzines.

#312/May '09. Criminal Damage, Never Healed, Masonics, Screaming Females, Germ Attak, Petticoats, Condominium, Passion Killers, Pioggia Nera, & the second part of the health issue.

#313/June '09. Cult Ritual, Acid Reflux, NN, Herds, Hunx and His Punx, Grass Widow, Project Hopeless, Defect Defect, Tom's Midnight Garden, Existers and scene reports from Sydney and Boston.

#315/August '09. Zero Boys, Skin Like Iron, Punch, The Black and Whites, Insomnio, Resist, Blank Dogs, Etacarinae, Come On, London and Brest scene reports.

#316/September '09. Amebix, Born/Dead, Divisions, Meatlocker, Something Fierce, Mutating Meltdown,Altercado, Anal Warnead, Nick Toczec, Cowley Club, Albany Scene Report.

#318/November '09. Destino Final, Ratas Del Vaticano, Hex Dispensers, John Joseph/Cro-Mags, Explode Into Colors, Ratos De Porao, Stupids. Antidotum/Czosnek Tour Diary, Disco Assault. Fuera De Linea

#319/December '09. The Fix, Slices, Nodzzz, Brilliant Colors, Positive Noise, Gun Outfit, Pink Reason, Scrotum Poles, Gandhi's Cookbook, Goner Fest Photospread, Punk On Kuollut, Eläköön Hardcore: A Personal History of Finnish Hardcore

#322/March '10. MRR Review Staff's 2009 Top Tens, Japanese artist Sugi, Death, Dry-Roy, Druid Perfume, Kim Phuc, Defensa Absoluta

#323/April '10. The Spits, Face the Rail, Battleторn, Scatha, Dadfag, Attentat Sonore, Partibrejkers, Mob Rules, Last Pogo, John Paull Williams from Really Red, Chuck Warner.

#324/May '10. Bruce Roehrs memorial,, Kleenex/ Liliput, Necro Hippies, Isterismo, RVIVR, Iceage, Tubers, Rot Shit, Beefeater, Cairo IL.

#325/June '10. X (Australia), Daylight Robbery, Ty Segall, Morne, Nü Sensae, Pollution, Th' Inbred, Bad Sports, Wankys, Rakosi, Lotus Fucker

#326/July '10. U-ron from Really Red, Slang, Bunny Skulls, Trash Kit, Sedition, High Castle, Marcel Duchamp, Street Eaters, Circle Pit, Mehkago NT, Random Conflict, New Orleans and Calgary scene reports.

#327/August '10. Os Estudantes, The Curse, Pekinska Patka, Venereans, Thou, Italian Scene Report, Ratcharge Zine, and Culo.

#328/Mocktober '10. Deathrats, The Conversions, Agnostic Front, Puffy Areolas, Super Wild Horses, Rape Revenge, Bernays Propaganda, New York and Czech Republic Scene Reports.
Report, Ratcharge Zine, and Culo.

#330/November '10. Forgetters, Acephalix, Foreign Objects, Hank IV, Pheromoans, La La Vasquez, Credentials, Bukkake Boys, Negative Lifestyle, Tyranna, Katriina Etholen, Ireland Scene Report.

#333/February '11. The Welders, Touch & Go Fanzine, Rai Ko Ris, Dolly Mixture, Hitman, Straight Arrows, Eskapo Phillippines Tour Diary, Venezuela Scene Report, Olympia Scene Report.

#334/March '11. 2010 Year End Top Tens, A State of Mind, Useless Children, Straight Arrows, Sober Living for the Revolution, DC Scene Report.

#335/April '11. Siege, Crazy Spirit, 1981, Mauser, Devour, Icon Gallery, Sunshine SS, Timmy's Organism, Whitney House, Attention Span, Michigan Scene Report.

#336/May '11. Kriegshög, Steve Ignorant, Teargas, Tantrum, Hygeine, Shoppers, Chris Walter, Adrenalin OD, Spastic Panthers, Hungarian Scene Report.

#337/June '11. Destroy All Movies, John Morton/ Electric Eels, White Fence, Ydinperhe, Nux Vomica, Vanya Bonecrusher, Black Feet, Uzi Rash, This Is LA not L.A.: '80s Hardcore Flyers in New Orleans, Buffalo NY Scene Report.

#339/August '11. Head Cleaners, Midnite Snaxxx, Cocskar, Small Bones, Xcentric Noise records, Grown Ups, Youth Avoiders, Tomek Lipinski/ Brygada Kryzys, Afternoon Gentlemen, Czech Punk History Part 2.

#340/September '11. Demokhratia, GG King, Ivan Brun, B-Lines, State Poison, Jeremy Hush, Love Triangle, Deaf Club Oral History, Czech Punk History Part 3.

#341/October '11. Brian Walsby, Plates, Decraneo, Diet Cokeheads, Royal Headache, Ed Nasty & the Dopeds, Black Mamba Beat Tour of South Africa, Unfit Scum, Mongrel Zine.

#342/November '11. Kyushu Noisecore Summit, Brown Sugar, Vapid, No Rest, Brain Killer, Roach Motel, Brain F, IFB, Nekromantiker, Aires & Graces.

#343/December '11. Porkeria, Descarados, Peace or Annihilation, E.A.T.E.R., Poly Styrene, Severence Package, Katorga Works, Unwanted Christmas Presents, Resist Her Transistor.

#344/January '12. OBN IIIS, Social Chaos, Neo Cons, Alice Bag, Vaginors, Blookrow Butcher, Wartorn, Shitty Limits Last Show Report, Wretched, Zero Progress Tour Diary part 1, Means to an End Fest, Slick 46, Toughskins, No Gods No Matresses Zine.

#345/February '12. 2011 Year End Top Tens, Big Eyes, Terrible Feelings, Zero Progress Tour Report Part 2, the Unruled, Rapid Loss.

#346/March '12. Bärchen und die Milchbubies, Who Killed Spokey Jacket, Krömosom Tour of Japan, Globsters, Nigh Birds, Tribal War, Give Praise records, Refuse records.

#347/April '12. Ron Paul Special Issue, Carburetor Dung, Dark Times, Neon Piss, Kruel, Lapinpolthajat, Criminal Code, Slice Harvester Zine, Iron hand, Indigesti, Damnable·Excite Zombies, Hawaii Scene Report.

#349/June '12. Omegas, Zyanose, Antisect, Negative Standards, No Statik, Your Pest Band, Eutanasia, Appalachian Terror Unit, Power Age, Inly Fumes and Corpses, Skizophrenia, David Ensminger, Greek Scene Report.

#350/July '12. The Photo Issue: Justine Demetrick, Ricky Adam, Jeanne Hansen, Don Pyre, Chis Boarts Larsen, Maria de Piedade Morais.

#351/August '12. 30th Anniversary Issue: MRR's Worst & Best, the Tim Yo Covers & Creentaping, Napalm Raid, God Equals Genocide, Stressors, American Sun, Ferocious X, Stripmines, Skitsystem, Juan y Diëgo, Banran.

#352/September '12. Stagnation, Luta Armada, Vaarallinen, Frozen Teens, Brain Slug, Noisecore Roundtable #2, Kohosh, Kvoteringen, Gritos de Resistencia, Alabaster Choad, Dipers, Murder in the Front Row, Support NYC.

#353/October '12. Brain Tumors, Effluxus, Anti Cimex, the Cravats, Unlearn, Warsong, Sick/Tired, To Live A Lie records, Stories from the Peruvian Underground Part 1, Bad Daddies, Imminent Destruction records with Lastly, Desperdicio, Against the Grain, Distурd.

#354/November '12. Replica, Ancient Filth, Synthetic ID, Maximo Volumen, O Inimigo, the Splits, Ohmwar, Beatrap, Victims Tour Diary Part 2, Girth records.

#357/February '13. Forward, Hounds of Hate, Contorture, Kicker, Nothing, Lunatic Fringe, Detonate records, Beatnik Termites, Detroit scene report.

#358/March '13. 2012 Year End Top Tens, Brontez Purnell, Potty Mouth, Nitad, Schizophazia, East Anglia scene report.

#359/April '13. Sickoids, Hassler. Divorce. Cancer Spreading. la Flingue. the Line. White Murder, the Paper Bags versus the Meat Sluts. Greenville, SC scene report.

#360/May '13. Stress, Proxy, the Kids, Kalte Lust, HIRS, Autonomy, Nuclëar Frost, Dead Air Studio, Blood Orange Infoshop, Death Traitors, Elks Lodge Massacre Revisited.

#361/June '13. Organize and Arise, Fear of Extinction, The Rats Tour Diary, Kathleen Hanna, The Shorts, Hard Feelings, No Power, Melusaaste, We Got Power Zine Part I.

#362/July '13. Jeff Paul, Trust Zine, Shaved Women, Hondartzako Hondakinak, Kurraka, Born Wrong, Homicide, United Arab Emirates & Toronto, Canada scene reports, We Got Power Zine Part II.

#363/August '13. Las Otras, Toinen Vaihtoehto zine, Sudor, Terveet Kädet, Black & White, Stillsuit, Taquila Mockingbird, Arturo Vega, Ruined Families, Baitline!!! zine, R.O.T.T.E.R., No Mistake, Siren Songs, Yorba Linda, CA scene report.

#364/September '13. Last Chaos, Snob Value, NE! Records, RAD, Asile, Whatever Brains, The New Flesh, Trashies, Forgotten Generation, Nightfall/ Population Zero, Texas Filth Scene Report.

#365/Ocotber '13. Condition Tour Diary, Zudas Krust, Doomed Society Radio, Kontrasekt, Bib Black Cloud, Hero Dishonest, Violent Party, Helvetin Viemärit, Malcolm, Clearview Records, Brno, CZ Scene Report.

#366/November '13. Chaos Destroy, Permanent Ruin, Thisclose, Halsey Swain, Rosa Apatrida, No More Fiction, Räjäyttäjät, Nudes, Tarantuja, Destruye y Huye, Vertical House Records, Punk Photo Roadtrip.

#367/December '13. The Mob, Creem, Gag, generacion Suicida, Good Throb, Force Fed Drugs, Total Trash, Life Chain, Concrete Worms, War// Plague, Julia Ostertag, Bad American.

#368/January '14. Queer Issue with Anti-Corpos, Shopping, Glory Hole, Porcelain, Strong Boys, Ejaculoid, Closet Burner, Peeple Watchin', Samuel Shanahoy, Dures et Gays, Priests, Groke, Screaming Queens tour diary, Queer Zine Fest London, International Queer Scene Report.

#369/February '14. Dezerter, Arctic Flowers, Stoic Violence, Strange Factory, Gobierno Militar, Poliskitzo, Voight-Kampff, Rat/Xerox, Nü-kle-er Blast Suntan.

#370/March '14. Year End Top Tens, Nervosas, Komplikations, Mallwalkers, New Orleans punk documentary Almost Ready.

#371/April '14. Bill Bondsman, Crapoulet Records, O! Kult, Rational Animals, Stab, Woolf, Varix, New York's Alright Fest, Miami Scene Report.

#372/May '14. EU's Arse, Siege, XAXAXA, Razorcake, Alert! Alert! Space Wolves, Rhythm of Cruelty, Straight Crimes, PMMA, Strange Attractor, Revenge of the Psychotronic Man, Scotland Scene Report.

#373/June '14. Anti You, Crusades, Rat Damage, Hank., Cottaging, Pesadilla, Distopika, Fed Up Fest, Damn Broads, Destry Hampton, Ben Snakepit & Mitch Clem, Los Culitos, The Lowest.

#374/July '14. No Babies, Grand Collapse, Gulag Beach, 1984, Quaaludes, Ausmuteants, Countdown to Armageddon, Wañuy, Fear of the Future, Bishops Green, Colombia Scene Report, Igor Vidmar, Endless Grinning Skulls.

#375/August '14. Una Béstia Incontrolable, Elefits, Extreme Noise Records, Vertigo, Glue, S.U.S, Svin: Leningrad Punk Progenitor, Thee Mighty Fevers, Cool Death Records, Miscalculations, Born Wrong Tour Diary.

#376/September '14. Dishrags, Gas Rag, SHIT, Iron Lung Records, Far-out Fangtooth, Kuudes Silmä, Maailmanloppu, Extincion, Paul Birnbaum of Septic Death, de los Insectos, Patras, Greece Scene Report, Traces in the Snow: '80s Siberian Punk.

#377/October '14. Fracaso, Frightwig, Government Flu, Mymanmike, Mind Cure Records, Era of Fear, Men Oh Pause, Elegy, Harsh Words, Berserktown fest and NY's Latino Punk Fest photos Mexico City Scene Report, Yectal Peña.

#388/November '14. Yugoslavia Retrospective part 1: Slovenia w/ Buldogi, Tozibabe, Indust-Bag, Quod Massacre, Pankrti, Grupa 92, Sund, and Kuzle. Also: Big Zit, Ooze, Yi, Supreme Echo Records, Australia Scene Report, photos from Philadelphia Rockers gig.

#389/December '14. Rakta, Autistic Behavior, Nunhex, Marmara Streisand, Protestor, Misled Youth, Dick & Jane, Mothers News, Brooks Headley, Death By Audio, Doomed To Extinction Records, photospread by Mateus Mondini.

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BELOW IS A LIST OF SOME OF THE MANY NON-US DISTROS THAT CURRENTLY CARRY MRR. WE PROVIDE THIS LIST SO YOU KNOW WHERE TO GET MRR INTERNATIONALLY! WE DO OUR BEST TO COVER AS MUCH TERRITORY OUTSIDE OF THE US AS WE CAN, BUT WE STILL WANT TO DISTRIBUTE TO MORE PARTS OF THE WORLD! WE NEED YOUR HELP IN ESTABLISHING CONTACTS WITH PUNKS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN CARRYING MRR. IF YOU HAVE A DISTRO, WANT TO SELL MRR AT SHOWS, OR JUST WANT TO GET A CHEAPER POSTAL RATE BY BUYING WHOLESALE, EMAIL DISTRO@MAXIMUMROCKNROLL.COM FOR MORE DETAILS! GET IN TOUCH WITH ACTIVE DISTRIBUTION FOR WHOLESALE IN EUROPE!!!!

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

Dear *MRR* Budz,

It was great getting to finally visit and hang out this year, thanks for all your kindness and inspirational energies and projects! My ears took a totally dumb break from chaotic energetic punk rock, then your latest international 2xLP dragged me back in grinning big ear-to-ear.

Thank you for being the bests!

Love

—Avi!

To all the wonderful (shit) wankers of *MRR*,

Hey, I just wanna let all you guys know that you're thought of and completely and utterly appreciated. Thank you for everything that you do; all of the time-consuming and hard work that you put into every issue and a special thanks for taking the time and effort into scratching-out (censoring) any nakedness throughout the issues that I order so that I can receive them.

I don't order as much as I would love to, because nine times out of ten I'm short on funds, but the ones that I have ordered I've read over and over and over. They've helped me stay grounded and helped me keep my sanity over the four years that I've done in here so far. Thank you for that!

Everything you do really means a lot to me. *MRR* has been a part of my life for 20 years now. Thank you!

Take care,

Sincerely

—Zac Wallace

#1709452

W-6 Trusty Camp

975 Ofstie St

Beeville, TX 78102

Dear *MRR*,

I am a prisoner at one of the many privatized C.C.A prisons located throughout the country. The one I reside at is located in Shelby, Montana. I have become a statistic, chattel in the prospering business of mass human incarceration. I luckily only have two-and-a-half years left of a five-year sentence.

I am very fortunate to have a sister who has stuck by me throughout this ordeal who sends me *MRR*. I have been a long time reader. Without *Maximum* I would go insane in here. When I've fully digested it, I donate it to the prison library for others to enjoy. I rarely get to have a meaningful conversation. The behavior of most inmates is rapacious to put it mild.

I have been listening to all things punk since the early eighties. *MRR* is a great distraction from daily prison life, as well as a glimpse of the outside world. I am in a facility that allows us to have music. I get many of my selections from the records section.

I spend a lot of my time reading copious amounts of literature to avoid having to deal with the general prison population. I love the book section. I am in dire need of good dialogue between me and any like-minded punks out there. I will respond to all letters sent my way.

Thank you *Maximum Rocknroll* for keeping a prisoner from losing what's left of his mind.

—John Andersen

#46624

C.C.A.

50 Crossroads Dr.

Shelby, MT 59474

Hello *MRR*,

This is Ralf, vocalist from Murder Disco X, Germany. It has been a while since I bothered to send a reader's letter to *MRR*. Think it must have been the good old days of pen and paper the last time around.

Being a reader from issue #0, to be honest, I don't care too much for *MRR* these days. Most of the columnists I loved to read are gone and too much music that I do not care about much is covered in *MRR* these days (yeah, I know, don't complain, send in contributions). So buying it is more like a bad habit... Mostly I flip through the record reviews and check the issues for ads.

I got used to you folx running ads for Semi-Major Labels like fat Wreck and Co. But the attached ad hit me in the face. I think Tim Yo would be rolling in his grave seeing that. The Nazi Eagle combined with the circled A? The runes of the Nazi SS? Anarcunt? Seriously? There are other "punk" magazines on the market for that kind of shit, huh?

—Ralf, Murder Disco X

Dear Ralf,

Please get your morals off my cunt and out of my punk. The reichsadler "imperial eagle" I used in my logo has been around since Roman times—it did not belong to the Nazis and it is mine to use. I am a feminist, an anarchist and a punk. I am sorry you find my raw pussy so offensive.

Also, using the deceased to prove a point is tacky and in poor taste.

—Ramona Deepthroat // Nightrider Records

Ralph,

You're right. We've hidden Nazi symbolism in all of our imagery to mock the brutal history of genocide and whisper messages of hate into the minds of all MRR *readers, just like the bands Crude SS and Subhumans among countless others who have utilized the "runes of the Nazi SS."*

Perhaps you can send us some advice about the appropriate language and symbolism you'd prefer for us to use; after all, you've clearly been in the scene for a long time and have earned the authority to dictate and interpret the ways in which politically and socially active anarchist punk women should represent themselves.

Arbitrary censorship is entrenched in paranoia and witch hunts are rarely justified. Gimme gimme raw pussy and fuck your politics.

—Sister Shame // RAWPUSSY

Dear Ralf,

Danke for emailing your bad habit. We have a standard procedure we follow when dubious content is submitted to us, and exposing White Power, fascist, racist, etc. bands is something the magazine has had a long-running record of doing. You mentioned you don't read MRR *much, so maybe you missed those issues.*

In this case, we knew we were not dealing with fascists. Are we to censor what some might knowingly call "poor taste?" Are we to condone those wanting to "shock and offend" when that clearly might not be the case? Lest we forget that one person's "too PC" is another person's "not PC enough."

Because MRR *is not the light, merely the prism.*

—Lydia

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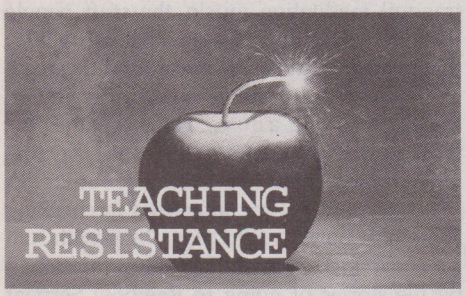
COLUMNS



Punks and other misfits/outsiders/radicals have always had a conflicted relationship with education and teaching. On one hand, we recognize that school is an oppressive institution. It is a potentially dangerous environment that is legally forced upon us when we are kids and teenagers in the primary and secondary grades (elementary and high school). Then, when we finally finish (or escape) it as adults, we are societally pressured to progress into often-ruinously expensive higher education (college). On the other hand, education has also been used as an escape valve for countless people who are stuck in grim or disadvantaged life situations otherwise, helping provide them with structure and intellectual skills that have the potential to improve their lives and those of others.

Though the institutions of education are historically problematic and often oppressive, students who have experienced them as "outsiders" understand the importance of learning from teachers who have developed radical notions of what education is and how it works. Sometimes, these students become teachers themselves, helping to subvert these educational institutions or find outside alternatives to them. It makes sense, given that much of punk embraces idealism, strong personal ethics, and intellectualism, that so many punks have become teachers while remaining punks. The Teaching Resistance *column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education.*

This month's column discusses some serious issues around the glamorization of poverty by many punks of privilege, and how stark a contrast this presents with the real, entrenched poverty experienced by many public school students, particularly students of color in and around economically disadvantaged communities. It is by Mike Friedberg, who teaches 7th grade science and 8th grade language arts at a public school in Chicago. Mike has run a record label and distro, booked shows, writes a zine (No Thanks)*, and was in Kontaminat. He can be contacted directly at mfriedberg85@gmail.com*

For the past several years, I have increasingly had mental debates whether I should attend various punk festivals. I'll be thirty by the time this is published. I have more responsibilities and focuses in my life, and punk has become less of a priority, which is not necessarily positive or negative. I still love hardcore punk, its energy, and the release it brings me. And I also have more responsibilities and other areas of focus and interest. It's a duality that many punks face as they get older.

But one aspect of first world punk that continuously bothers me is the glamorization of poverty. Punk is about rejecting society in many ways. But so many punks attempt to do this by repudiating the common things that give many working class people a sense of basic dignity—their appearance, cleanliness, clothes, etc.

My perspective on this evolved more and more as I started working with urban youth over seven years ago. I began working at a local community center, became a substitute teacher, and eventually became a full time public school teacher, which I have been doing for nearly three years now. One of the first conversations I had where this topic came up, was at an after school program that I worked for. Somehow, the topic of dumpster diving came up. My students had never heard of it and were completely flabbergasted that someone would eat food from the garbage, let alone by choice. They were in complete shock. One of them told me that you couldn't pay him enough money to do that.

That conversation stuck with me, especially because dumpster diving is so prevalent with many punks, even beyond the "lifestyle" of many "activists" and oogles.

Years before this, I remember discussing this kind of thinking with an older punk I looked up to, and he told me that his main issue with those people was that they're simply taking, not building or creating anything. He also pointed out that in the process of advocating shoplifting from Walmart (an undoubtedly horrendous corporation) the prices become raised for working class people who shop there out of necessity. This point is controversial to many. What is definitely true is the white privilege factor that a white punk has that many ignore. Every single person of color that I know is incredibly cautious in stores. I was with a family member (who is a person of color) and she mentioned that even though I try to reuse bags when I bring them into stores, she never does because she would be accused of stealing.

I know that for the most part I'm preaching to the choir here, but these points are still relevant, and the fact is that glamorizing poverty is still all too prevalent in punk. This really stood out to me when I went to a big show a few years ago. I was overwhelmed with disgust at seeing the punks there. Perhaps I was naive, but I always believed that punk was about more than not bathing and acting like an idiot. What attracted me to punk (and what still attracts me) is the critical thinking aspect of it; punk is about questioning and looking at not just the outside world, but our own scene as well.

I'm not sure how to say that without sounding judgmental, but it's the truth. I have no problem with people who just want to relax and party, as most of my friends do, and punk shows are definitely an escape and a place to relax. But I don't think that punk shows should become the equivalent of college first parties, except with a different dress code, which encourages people to appear as poor and dirty as humanly possible.

Between the filth, ignorance, and scummy old dudes trying to hit on young girls, by the end of the show I became pretty depressed. I had a long talk with a friend who also attended whom I got into punk with at the same time. We both realized that this was a new chapter in our lives. As much as we had detached from punk in many ways, we realized that we would probably stop going to many of these big shows/fests, and that we were moving on. It felt strange, especially because for many years, punk seemed to be the only thing I had.

(With all that said, I still love punk and everything it brings to me. A week ago I saw Glue, Violent End, and Public Assault—a band I had not seen and has a singer still in high school. The bands were amazing and it

made me so happy to see super young punks going crazy and having fun for great bands; I wouldn't say I'm jaded, but I am critical.)

Two days later I returned to the school I work at to witness one of the most incredible things I have ever seen. The classroom next to mine performed a "mock trial," complete with two real life lawyers as judges. The students all had different roles—prosecution, defense, bailiff, witnesses—complete with pieces of evidence for all to see. All the students dressed up to the nines. You could see them beaming with pride in their shirts, ties, dresses, skirts, etc.

I teach at a low-income school where 93% of our students are low-income. It is nearly all students of color. The community deals with many common urban problems—poverty, gangs, violence, and drug use. This becomes relevant as a reference point. Seeing our students perform this mock trial was beyond inspiring. Many of our students are "teenage kids with adult problems," as my coworker put it. Seeing these kids put in 100% into this event was incredible. They worked so hard, and were so proud.

My own pride came shining through when I watched the jury, which was composed entirely of my own students! Seeing them use their critical thinking skills to evaluate the evidence of the trial was incredible. I felt such joy in being their teacher. One of them even told me afterwards that she now wants to become a lawyer. This was particularly incredibly because of the student herself, who has an incredibly difficult life and is one of the most persistent people I have ever met. She, like many of my students, will be the first person in her family to attend college.

Hearing those words was amazing, and a complete contrast from the disgust I had felt a few days ago. I'm not saying this to be self-righteous or to say that teaching is for everyone, because it definitely is not. (Nor is college.) I love hardcore, but if punks want to be taken seriously and create any tangible, positive change in the world, they have got to wake the fuck up and stop glamorizing poverty.

—Mike Friedberg

I am an activist, a punk, and an aspiring teacher. I am constantly searching for ideas/inspiration on how to radicalize and subvert teaching pedagogy (the science, art, and philosophy of education) to better understand and elevate my students. As mentioned earlier, this column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com

—John No, Teaching Resistance *editor*

The only show I've been to this last month since returning to Australia from holidays overseas is the launch for the AUSSIE PUNK GALS 2015 CALENDAR. Some friends and I set up the launch as we'd spent the last six months organising this calendar, which raised money for a few charities, plus got a lot of local punk ladies together to promote their projects and have fun. This was the finale; hard work paying off. The line up was a mixed bill, trying to bring along a few different crowds plus all bands had at least one female member. Headlining was long time hardcore punk cult legends STRAIGHTJACKET NATION. Members of this band also play in garage post punk band UV RACE who was on second last. MISS DESTINY just put out a 7" on HoZac, and CONSTANT MONGREL, whose last record came out over a year ago now on Siltbreeze also played the show. Dark crust peace punks MASSES reissued their sold out 7" on tape for this show and it was the biggest selling merch item on the night. Lastly (or firstly), opening was a new Cool Death band TOMMY T AND THE CLASSICAL MISHAPS. Straight up snotty punk with similar sounds to the other Cool Death bands but no hardcore echoing in these twangs and synth beeps. For the record, it was a good show—well attended with almost 300 people through the door, great bands, I had my distro set up as well as the calendars for sale, we had a champagne fountain (making it glamorous to celebrate the ladies in punk) and great power pop and '70s rock dance tunes to boogie down to afterward. All the door sales also went to the three local independent women's charities along with calendar profits.

It's the only show I've been to because when the work is there I take it, and summer here is prime working time for me. Recently, a vegan eatery opened in the city and I got a job serving food and doing kitchen hand jobs. It opened in a shopping centre, but not the trashy ones you find in the suburbs with mothers dragging screaming kids around, teenagers hanging out and doing petty crime and lots of other weird and entertaining characters lurking. People who dress in new and brand clothes shop at this place. People who wear real jewellery, make a decent living and come from the southeast side of Melbourne. Everyone looks clean cut and fashionable. Even the cleaners have to wear a full face of make-up—while they scrub your shit! Shortly after this eatery opened, they got speakers and introduced background music. I didn't expect what they put over the speakers to be flash hot. They started experimenting with a few different genres to try and gauge some sort of mood for the place. First it was tranquil meditation music, the stuff people that don't eat animals would obviously love… that peaceful stuff sends me around the bend. Then they went with more worldly music. Bongos, chanting, a flute... The chef at the time was into drum and bass, so he would play that when the boss had left, talking about it with me to try and get me interested in checking some of it out. I would play along with him for cheap kicks, pretending to be entertained by his stories of going to Rainbow Serpent fest, take a lot of acid and dance around with a bunch of other neo-hippies. Really I couldn't give a crap about music that made me want to smack my head against a wall to a beat. The music flavour of choice finally settled on "hard house" when the boss was around, and some sort of commercial alternative stuff the other people my age and younger listened to when he wasn't. It's the type of music they play on Triple J radio, something trendy and alternative but for me absolutely punishingly horrible and boring pretending to disguise itself as innovative and flavoursome to the dull youth. Last week I was serving up some food, doing my working thing when another song came on, it was all one and the same to me. However, the young lady serving next to me expressed that she loved this song and band. I said I'd never heard it and asked what type of music it was. "Oh I don't even know, but it's just great!" …What is wrong with you people?! To drown out the music I'd hum tunes to myself which kept my craziness at bay for the most part, until I got stuck on one chorus of one song because I couldn't remember the rest of the words. At that point, I grabbed the mp3 player and tried thinking up the most "normal" music I liked that would be good for me to listen to and also wouldn't get turned off. The music was streaming off Spotify so went into a shuffle mix of some basic punk stuff. I put on the DAMNED and it went to the RAMONES, the MISFITS, the MC5, the NERVES, the BUZZCOCKS and so forth. All great music but standard punk and, to me, tame and entry-level. Surely passable in a normal work environment? How naïve I am to a world outside my own.

Compared to the watered down whatever-it-was they were listening to, these songs sounded like chainsaws and exorcism. Their lo-fi production, questionable lyrics, fuzzy

guitars and fast tempos provided contrast to what they were happy listening to moments earlier. In this work environment, I was able to see that this sort of punk music was actually really crazy to normal fucking people who consider music a background beat, or well...they don't even consider music! *"I got something to say"* Danzig howls into the buzz of the opening strum "Oh, crap" I think as the following lyrics snap into my brain a split-second before they're sung out loud *"I killed a baby today and it doesn't matter much to me, as long as it's dead"*. I just pretend nothing's wrong and hope no one's listening. There were a few other similar moments and I just keep cleaning and acting like nothing out of the ordinary is going on, but knowing everyone else working is suddenly confronted by this music that has pushed itself to the foreground and is shoving itself in their faces. After a while I disappeared off for a toilet break and when I returned the music had been changed back to whatever they were listening to beforehand. It's like they've all breathed a sigh of relief and are again going about their lives like such blasphemous music doesn't exist and that horrible experience didn't happen. I feel a little disheartened but at the same time, am not that surprised.

I live so much inside my own world that I generally forget that there's a very large portion of the population I don't associate with who don't consider music important, either that or they just have really bad music taste (yeah, I know how ignorant that sounds but c'mon...punk!). I never really got it when reading about people's experiences getting into punk with these kinds of bands, or reviewing them. Upon first listening to this music, they would express how they'd never heard anything like it before and it blew them away, opening them up to deeper levels of stranger music. I didn't necessarily grow up in punk but I started going to street punk shows underage, so when I started delving more into the older generations of music as opposed to the contemporary stuff, I was already accustomed to punk culture, what they looked like, what they would sing about and how they'd act. I'd find great music and awesome weird things that I thought were super fresh but maybe nothing was shocking in a way that it blew a hole in the wall of my life, y'know? Being at work around all these normal or well-off people made me realise how different my life and punk life is. Not saying that the world is black and white between these two, just very contrasting in this situation.

Today I finished work and went to grab some rolling papers from the closest 7/11 in the city before heading home. Walking to my bike, I passed a *Big Issue* seller, which is a magazine sold on the street by homeless or disabled people to give them the opportunity to work and earn some money. I stopped and bought one, exchanged a few words and patted the guy's dog. It was 30 seconds of interaction that reminded me I really have no reason to complain about bad music or boring people. That, as much as the people in that shopping centre are stuck in their worlds, so am I a lot of the time. I am able bodied, have a job (however good or bad it may be) and can enjoy spinning good music in the comforts of my home, even if I have to put up with working around and serving brainless robots sometimes.

Sorry if that column was a little all over the shop, still working on this writing business. Don't have much to say about Australian punk at the moment because I've been to one show here in the last two months. But everyone's top bands and releases of 2014 are being posted around and I'm listening to a lot of different local stuff, it's good. International tours for next year are being announced too. Here's to a New Year, right? (I say as this calendar comes out in the February issue)

stitchesinmyheadfanzine@gmail.com

Nowadays literature is taking over my life. Not that I have a deep knowledge of it, or I could move as familiarly as I do in punk, but I spend more time reading through the *Paris Review* interviews than I do hunt around on blogs to discover new sounds in punk rock. While there are obviously always so many to learn about, it's a different kind of obsession; but what's good is that there is obsession in both. Music is instant, it takes up as much of my time as a song lasts. While the same amount of words could take different amounts of time for me to read. It's all about the pacing of the text. And I have to read through books to know them, so now my bed is surrounded by unread books, accompanied by a to-read list that exists in my head which will probably take me one-and-a-half year to get through. But I'm already enthusiastic in advance when I browse through the covers. As with books and music, the core of the creation is self-expression. I look differently upon music than I did before I became a book worm.

Also, do you remember me holding a grudge against jazz? At work I do nothing but listening to Pharoah Sanders, Eric Dolphy, Derek Baily and an enormous amount of Kraut rock, sometimes even to music that is close to techno, monotonous, repetitive music produced by sad and dirty computers. It's not about growing up, because when I get home and put on a Wretched or the Electric Eels LP, I can appreciate the real layers of their music, where the visceral meets the thoughtful chaos. But as I expanded my spectrum in music that I find interesting, I was also in hurry to get through last year's music as I was preparing my YETT in parallel. I have realized that I stopped appreciating the relaxing mediocrity of the majority of punk bands, as much as I love bands who just go for being themselves, aka individually good.

I also realized that time is not as bad of an invention as I used to think. Yes, it blocks our mind more than anything and silently controls everything that we do, but it also reveals truth. It places answers next to questions. Such big words, but I'm no longer afraid of not including the exact best bands of a year in my YETT list, because using time and the kindness of the coordinators, I knew that whatever I will left out from the list I could include here; either because I negotiated a later deadline for my column or because I can talk about the leftovers in two years from now. It's not news, as if someone always has to be the first and smartest—although I do desire both—but desire works best when not satisfied. I can wait, and until then dig up everything that was great in the '90s, since obviously everything was perfect in the '80s and magical in the '70s. A couple days ago I started listening to the Eucharist LP and felt so stupid when looking back on how I thought the '90s were super boring and nothing happened then. I have a medicine aftertaste, an awkwardly bad feeling, about how now in Europe everybody is wanting to fucking go back and re-live those lazy days that were lit by fading neon lights and cheap drug nights. I mostly see my stupidity in giving too much relevance to decades as if they would mark anything. Take Aspirin Feast, they sound like a systematic skull fuck that could have happened whenever. Discovery of the week was Balance of Terror. A band that sounds as hardcore should kinda sound. Fast and ferocious punk music, that takes itself as seriously as it is still threatening for the buy-in-culture but doesn't stink of let's-sit-in-a-basement-and-think-about-utopia bullshit. Oh yeah, with them I skipped into another decade, but the early '00s still feel like very shady times, yet there was light then too. Another new hobby of mine is buying records by instinct. I was browsing through records when Banque Allemande came across and I was amazed by their cover art, in which well-shaped, naked bodies were put together in a collage and I was convinced by SS Records who put this record out, so I gave them a quick listen online—yes, I was buying records on Discogs—and a few days later I found this

record glued to my turntable. They are an amazing German post-punk, kinda noise rock band. The heavy, modestly distorted bass and drums make a solid base for the guitars to fuck around, while the singer chants with a bitter tone of voice. They grab me down into a vortex of awesome guitar noise. The guitar sound (is it really a guitar?) swings between the noise of things falling down from a shelf, or someone cruelly rubbing rubber. Alas, it's not such an experimental sonic journey. I can dance to it, I can jump around to it, I can be happy around their music, it's such perfect company.

It compensates my loss for how I failed to be quick enough to buy the Tampax / Hitler SS split 7" at the Rakta show. For expiation, I went through both bands' discography and now I want that fucking split 7" even more. All hail to freak scene, mutant punx.

There is a feature in every good music that makes the music good. Although I believe in genres, I seem to find this essential component mutual in all the music I find great. The ones I can relate to, not just understand their qualities. Common sense is something I want to leave behind. Umberto Eco discusses the difference between the empirical and the model readers. He says a model reader could place himself into the book, accept even the fictional rules of the book and decide who exactly tells the story, meaning who is the model author. The model reader is keen to understand every detail of a book while still enjoy it with all their heart. Still, there is place for judgment because the model author creates the model reader as the author sets up the environment and rules within which the reader should exist, and following this are millions of genres I don't wanna look for, not even for a miserable second. But what is great in great literature is similar to what is great in great punk music, and this sometimes makes me feel that everybody is just writing one great tune. From Sex Vid to Sun Ra, I have to move backwards in time but it's not a waltz, I twerk around culture. I cross Skull Kontrol, Raincoats, Die Kreuzen, Execute, Organisation, Warum Joe, Born Against, the Fix, Kizárt Dolog, Skullflower, 45F1, Stigmathe, High Rise, Totalitär, Biztonsági Tanács, Venom P Stinger, the Slits.

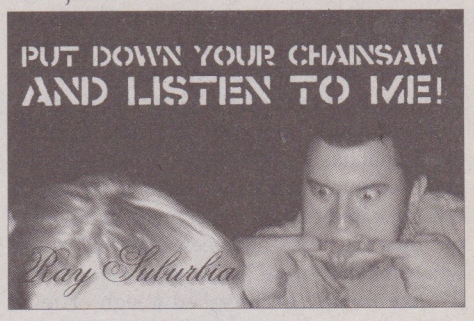
Luckily as it turns out from my YETT, this collective noise was also done in 2014. I already hate myself because I missed out Tercer Mundo's agonizing brain destruction. Just like the contemporary Mexico sound, they also use a very rusty approach to tell the everyday frustration of that sinking country's reality. It's hardcore punk with sharp nails sticking out from it all around. Some of the songs have a weird groove in them, which makes the whole atmosphere of the record more dangerous, since someone found time to dance in a battlefield.

Right at the finish line, I was introduced to Heavy Makeup from Gothenburg. Their demo looks like it's gonna be another band mixing Japanese craziness with the mangel sound, filtering it through no wave noise. Rather, they stick to the golden era Touch & Go sound and summon acts such as Scratch Acid or Killdozer. Constant cynical headache. The repetitive minimalism hits me like a neighbor driller that wakes me up from an amphetamine hangover. Although this band wears its influences proudly, it avoids the accusation of being a reproduction of something that happened decades ago. They reminded me of МРАЗЬ, who are hailing from Russia. Although МРАЗЬ's sound is bigger, as in Russia everyone takes whatever they do more seriously than people do everywhere else. Their sound catches me the way a tidal wave wraps around your helpless body. Here are more guitars and manic obsession to play around with sounds. Still, its charm is carried in its simplicity, but simplicity that works is always really close to perfection. I can hear the effort they have put into their songs, just as Bulgakov worked on his masterpiece for decades. Their aggro strength stops before it becomes threatening to everyone, meaning there is no serial killer vibe, just the pure power that is present in great music. Anyone who thinks this is just a Russian black market bootleg of Pissed Jeans is stupid as fuck, because they reach beyond Pissed Jeans cool; a washed-clean presentation of true filth. Pissed Jeans reminds me of music, while МРАЗЬ reminds me of how fucked up humanity is. Maybe МРАЗЬ rather bends towards to Brainbombs, Drunk with Guns mind hammering brutalism, but it feels they went in search of something and luckily found their true self.

Going back to Sweden, I recently received an e-mail from Två Krig saying: "Fuck it we want to be heard"—and they truly should be. I'm nauseatingly filled with the dark wave, neo-romantic sound and no longer interested in deciding if it's a new trend or if someone just opened the door for millions of bands who were waiting in their dark and miserable rooms, spending days in a valium daze while cutting out the eyes of poster stars. Två Krig don't pity themselves, I have the luxury of not understanding Swedish thus I think they focus more on paranoid, block-of-flat reality rather than failed romance tragedy. They gather the Wipers' "Doom Town" sound to flavor the Swedish traditional melodies, and it works really well. Lost in Ikea. The only thing I had to do to become their model listener was to sink down to find the people within the music, the fragility, the risk and danger. There they sound more scared than sad, and this picks them out from the line of all those post-punk, neo wave bands. Deep down lay so many ideas and layers of these thoughts, yet there is a disturbing sterility to their sound that is probably their frustration needing to be transmitted.

What else? I liked the Mosoco demo, Life Form's *Creepy Crawly*, Sperm demo, Status Null demo, Gutter Gods' *Innersense*. But this is not that much to miss out. 2014, see you in ten years when I know more about you. It was a great year but I always hope for a better one.

P.S.: There are two more Hysterics songs left behind, coming out soon; both tracks are killer jams.



"Hey you little South American Spanish-speakin' country,
Watch me as I whip some political advisors right on ya.
You'll still have a bit of your own personality left.
Don't you worry, you know this kind of thing happens all the time."
—Naked Raygun, "Hips Swingin'"

Politics have always been an integral part of my life. I had no choice, really. My birth, in a very direct way, was a political one. My father and his family left Colombia in the wake of ten years of bloody civil war which became know simply as *La Violencia*—The Violence. They had a traditional immigrant story, money saved, work sought, papers in hand. Nonetheless, the need to leave their comfortable life in Bogota due to political violence and start anew in America was understandably difficult. It's not like they had always dreamed of moving to the US.

My mother's story, her family's story, is much more dramatic and steeped very much in the politics of the American Century. She and her brother came to the US by themselves as unaccompanied children—much like the recent flood of Latin American children coming across the border due to revolution and unrest in their home countries. But since the country they came from was Cuba, where there had just been a revolution unpopular with the US government, as opposed to say, the Obama administration supported Honduran coup in 2009 (which has lead to a failed state along the lines of Somalia or Afghanistan) they were allowed to enter the country as political refugees.

A very strange, and bittersweet, first taste of American privilege.

My grandmother, Raquel is a very strong woman. She got divorced, and remarried, in a time and place where that sort of thing *did not* happen. She was first married to man whom she loved, but wasn't the love of her life, and had a family (my mother and uncle). They worked in the same field: she was a pharmacist and he on the business side of pharmaceuticals.

In an incredible surreal moment of coincidence they actually found themselves as guests at Fidel Castro's wedding in 1948, due to the fact that my grandfather was trying to do business with Fidel's father at the time. This was something that my biological grandparents kept a secret until a few years ago. They were embarrassed by it, but at the same time afraid of the possible retribution that such an association with Castro—as random and tenuous as it was—could have if heard by the more virulent parts of the anti-Castro Cuban exile community in Miami.

By the time of the revolution my grandmother had married her true love, José Sarasa—the now head coach of the Cuban national basketball team. In 1959 she made a decision that I, hopefully, will never have to make. She decided that it would be best if she sent her children, alone, to a foreign country.

There was no guarantee she would ever see them again.

Operation Pedro Pan was a program started by the Catholic Welfare Bureau (Catholic Charities) of Miami, with support from Robert Kennedy and the US government. From 1959-1961 more than 14,000 children were sent by their families to America in hopes to avoid the Marxist-Leninist "indoctrination" of growing up in a communist country. As the local organization obviously did not have the facilities to take care of a city's worth of children, many children were placed in foster homes around the US via other Catholic Charity groups. My mom and her brother were sent to Granite City, IL—a small town just on the other side of the Mississippi River from St. Louis.

Very, very far away from Cuba. Physically and culturally.

My step-grandfather, the man who helped raise me, soon defected himself. Coaching the Cuban national basketball team afforded him the ability to travel internationally, something not given to many people. During the 1962 Pan American games, held in Jamaica that year, he decided to defect. His story was used as American anti-communist/pro-American propaganda. It appeared (often with him as a nameless man—an ideological point) in such newspapers as the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Rome Daily Sentinel* (of Rome, NY), the *Daily Reporter* (Dover, OH), *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), the *Belvidere Daily Republican* (Belvidere, IL), and the *Lawrence Daily Journal-World* (Lawrence, KS). Most notably, though, was his story being part of a long-form article titled "Bad Blood in the Tropics" in the August 27, 1962 edition of *Sport Illustrated. It* included the following dramatic, but completely factually correct, reporting:

"Most of the escapes have had an aura of understated melodrama...The spiriting away of Basketball Coach José Sarasa [...] had even more of a serape-and-dagger air to it.

"That night Cuba lost to Mexico 85 to 61. After the final buzzer Sarasa made his way through the crowd to congratulate the Mexican coach. He then went to the officials' table and spoke a few words to the timekeeper. He stalled for a few moments, watching his team file out and head for their bus. Apparently satisfied that his boys were on their way back to the dorm, he walked briskly toward the exit. Once outside the gate, instead of turning to the car waiting to take him back, Sarasa went quickly through a vacant lot to a black sedan, its engine running, a back door ajar. Díaz materialized, clasped Sarasa's hand and helped him into the car, which gunned out of the lot in a swirl of dust. Approaching the hideaway it passed through a band of 30 Cuban exiles armed with machetes, sticks and shovels ready to repel any attempt to recapture Sarasa. 'My wife might be killed for me doing this,' Sarasa said. 'I hope she renounces me.'"

He hadn't told her that he was defecting. He couldn't have. He didn't know he would have the chance until it came.

My grandmother was alone in Cuba, her ex-husband, her husband, her children all en route to America—hoping that she would be able to see them again. Hoping she wouldn't be caught attempting to leave the island, now under heavy scrutiny as the wife of an international political embarrassment. She didn't see her husband or children for years until she finally made it to the states, hidden under a false floor board of a fishing boat sailing the 90+ miles from Cuban shore to American.

To say that I'm "into politics" is to not understand how inextricable Politics (with that giant, capital P) is from the very essence of my existence. How the chance meetings of ideology, policy, history, violence, and struggle are as much my lineage as the chance meetings of any two individual people.

This past week the news came that Barack Obama had decided to resume diplomatic relations with Cuba. This is a huge deal. The US has not had official state relations with Cuba since January 3, 1961. Months after they severed ties, the US attempted an overthrow of the island via 1,500 CIA trained Cuban exiles. There was also Operations Northwoods and Mongoose, in which the US planned bombings and hijackings in order to frame the Cuban government. The Yakity Sax soundtracked CIA plans to assassinate Fidel Castro with exploding cigars, conch shells, or dose him with LSD or drug him so his beard fell out before his gave one of his infamous four-plus hour long speeches. And then came the Cuban Missile Crisis. The closest the Earth has ever come to being destroyed by the ego of man.

When news spread of this new political development a lot of my friends got in touch with me. I got a handful of messages along the lines of, "Let's go!" or "Check it out!" It's always nice when people want to get a hold of you with news they think will make your day. Unfortunately in our era of clickbait and sharing headlines (not necessarily the articles that follow them because, hey, who has the attention span to actually read them) I spent a lot of time having to explain stuff to them instead of actually reveling or being too excited about it.

No, you're not probably going to Cuba. Well, not really more easily than it was two months ago. It's never been impossible to go to Cuba. People go there *all the* time. Erick and Ivy from Black Rainbow/Miami/a million other bands have been there. Olivia from Catholics and the Pill went with her family. Brad from Dear Landlord/Rivethead biked across it. Milwaukee melodic/pop-punkers Uh-Oh even toured there a couple of years ago. *Yes, an American punk band toured Cuba.* In fact, they are arguably the first American band to have ever toured the island since the revolution. At least now for performers there are less hoops to jump through to get to the island, even easier for people visiting family—but for the casual tourist, its the same as it has been.

What has happened here is politics as usual, in the sense that its state level. The US is now talking with Cuba. It's "opening" Cuba. If you ever want to think about Obama being a progressive, a liberal, just consider this—this is the 21st century equivalent of Nixon opening China in 1972. This is about markets and business, not humanitarianism or goodwill. This is the split-second visibility of the invisible hand.

As a guy who's spent an inordinate amount of time researching Cold War policies, effects, and culture in the United States—both academically and casually in order to get a larger context for the historical narrative of my family—I can't even begin to completely articulate how infuriating it is to me to see people saying stuff like, "Looks like the Cold War is finally over!"

What if I told you that we are knee deep in the Cold War. And that this is a perfect example. The embargo hasn't been lifted. Won't be. Obama can't even do that with an executive order. The US Congress has to do that, and I doubt the Republican Congress is into allowing open trade with a devoutly communist state. Now, profiteering and

handpicked trading in small markets, that's something any good American can support. At least in this hemisphere.

We are currently *destroying* the Russian economy via old-school Cold War *realpolitik* by working with the Saudis to drop the price of a barrel of oil to below an economically sustainable level for the Russian government to survive (coincidentally it also "just so happens" to be hurting Iran and Venezuela as well). Hey, it worked to deliver the deathblow to the Soviets, why not Putin? After all, Putin did run his mouth in October in Sochi at the Valdai International Discussion Club meeting (where the theme of the talks was the salaciously creepy/terrifying "The World Order: New Rules or a Game Without Rules"), basically saying that America's imperialism and policies concerning warfare and occupation since 9/11 have wreaked havoc on the world and have redefined what's acceptable to do—so Russia is going to go ahead and do the same. Deal with it. Fuck it, and fuck you.

Really, Vlady?

So after crushing the ruble under a barrel of oil, turning around and talking to Cuba is a *giant* fuck you to Russia—we're now allied with both Red China *and* Red Cuba. *DX suck it!*

There's also the intra-American politics side to the whole thing. We all know that Hillary Clinton is most likely going be the Democratic presidential candidate, but the Republican one isn't so clear-cut. One of the top contenders is Marco Rubio, a Cuban-American senator from Miami. The Cuban exile community in Miami is an extremely powerful voting bloc in one of (if not the) most influential states when it comes to national elections. Historically, the Cuban-American vote has been categorically Republican. These are people who fled leftist Cuba after their property was seized—of course they're Republicans. But my generation of Cuban-Americans isn't so reactionary. We see ourselves as part of a larger Latino-American community, acknowledge the privilege we've been afforded due to politics, and no longer see our enclave as unique. Were not waiting for Fidel to die to go back to the island. We understand that most Cubans in American are no longer exiles, but actually immigrants. Obama is hoping to turn the purple-ing Cuban-American voting block not only against its own community's candidate, but into to a decidedly blue one—just after the Dems lost Congress, just before Clinton will be running for president.

But I'll be the first to call myself *quite* cynical.

Basically what's happening right now in regards to Cuba is, in my opinion, a giant step forward, but its also at the immediate expense of the people who really need the help. All that's about to happen is that American companies are about to become richer. With the changes in policy primarily coming to trade and services you have people like John Deere spokesman Ken Golden already saying, "Cuba is a potential market for John Deere products and services." Sounds a lot like the island before '59. After all, Obama didn't make it easier for Cubans to get food and medicine, but he did finally let Americans use their credit and debit cards on the island. And again, who did he make travel to Cuba easier for? Businessmen. And politicians.

So how do I feel about the whole thing?

Uno, dos, y tres, que paso mas jodido.

ENDNOTES:

1) Thank you Julia Booz, for texting me hella early in the morning and asking me what I thought about all this, reading my torrent of rants, laughing, and telling me I should write a column about it instead of why I hate California.

2) If you are interested in what you can do on a personal level to help out Cuban punks, check out Solidarity Rock. They're a Canadian non-profit group that has been working since 2008 to collect instruments to take to Cuba and help spread true DIY punk. They have helped record some of the first ever Cuban punk and hardcore records and are always looking for people to make donations or help put on benefit shows. Check em out at solidarityrock.com

3) Thanks again to Heather Blotto for purchasing a collegiate sports photo of José Sarasa from a Mexican sport memorabilia dealer on Ebay and gifting it to me and family.

4) Big ups to Cristy Road, Roger Miret, Al Jourgenson, and the countless other not "punk famous" Cuban punks.

5) This whole column is obviously just my personal opinion on the matter. I would *love* to talk to anyone about it further. Especially other Cuban-American or Cuban punks. We can argue like the *viejitos* outside of Versailles. Hit me up at stayinchicago@hotmail.com

I've been trying to figure out how to write this column for a while, but I think it might still be kind of all over the place. I don't know. Here's the thing: I feel like I've talked a lot about how we don't get to have heroes, but that makes it sound like we...*want* to have heroes? If that makes sense?

Why would we even want heroes? Fuck heroes!

I talk a pretty good game in this column every month about how, like, we as white people need to shut the fuck up and quit being assholes, and how bands with women in them are objectively better than bands without women, and all this other politically correct reverse racist overbearing social justice stuff, but honestly? The truth is that I'm the Macklemore of this shit. I'm just some middle-class white person stumbling around trying not to be an asshole. I mean, I am thinking about stuff, right? And I want to talk about the stuff I am thinking about. But... uh, I should acknowledge more often that I really am just an idiot with some books by bell hooks.

I published a novel a couple years ago that did really well, especially for a little book from a young independent publisher. It's about a trans girl who's not great at life. Some people really liked it—especially among a certain demographic of mostly young, mostly white trans girls from largely middle class backgrounds. It's a book about stuff that we don't get to talk about, outside of like, when Camp Trans used to happen, or late nights on tour, or when you want to kill everybody in the whole Trans Health Conference because you keep going, every year, and you keep having to walk out of workshops because everyone is so proud of themselves for being so smart about gender and social justice while they are ignoring trans women—at best!—but more often erasing us, spouting off bullshit misogyny, and deifying genderqueer trans guys as if masculinity somehow becomes mystically non-toxic—*poof!*—when it appears in the actions and attitudes of people who are allowed at women's colleges, so you storm out trying not to cry and end up hiding under a table with the one other trans woman at the whole fucking thing who you trust, squeezing at your painfully engorged emotional bile duct until eventually that old hurt turns back into anger again and you can laugh at what an asshole everyone is enough to crawl out from under the table and go get drunk.

We don't get to talk about that shit much and honestly, I didn't even talk about that shit that much in that book, exactly. But there was Real Trans Stuff sort of like that in it and for that reason sometimes people have written, on the internet, that I am their hero, for having written that book.

It's fucking weird, dude.

I mean. "It's a Crime I Never Told You About The Diamonds in Your Eyes" just came on the stereo and I balled my fists in the air and bounced in time with the kick drum without getting off the couch. I dance like a fucking baby.

I mean it's fine. I know nobody could possibly mean that I am their hero literally.

Hopefully that goodreads reviewer is aware that I'm kind of an idiot. (I keep calling myself an idiot, and I hope you understand that I'm not getting down on myself or anything. I am being honest but also I mean it pretty affectionately.) It just makes me feel, like, okay. First? You need to get better heroes. But then second? You need to stop having heroes.

Like from my perspective whenever I get praise for that book, I mostly think of this passage where Maria, the protagonist, has this friend named Piranha who's smart and has good boundaries. And when Piranha says something smart and reminds Maria about those boundaries Maria is like, "Jeez, why aren't you the president?" And Piranha is like, "Well, it's because I'm a woman. And because I'm trans."

But here's the thing where sometimes I decide to read that passage at a reading and I get to it and I wince and turn bright red: hat character, Piranha? She's Latina. (I think she's Puerto Rican, which may not be explicit in the book, but I am the JK Rowling of this Hogwarts. So.) One of the reasons that she's not president is that she's a fucking Latina and if I had not fucked up that particular exchange she would have said that out loud. Like can you imagine her not being aware that her racial and cultural heritage is a barrier to becoming the president of the United States of America?

I fucked that up! Which I'm telling you about here not for absolution or something—I fucked up and I own it and hopefully this feeling of dread I have about it will remind me not to fuck that up again in the future—but instead to be like, man, person on goodreads.com who thinks I am her hero, I wish you didn't have to have a hero who fucks up and does racist shit sometimes.

(Also it is neither here nor there but Piranha is enthusiastic about things like heroin and pills, which might also be an impediment to becoming president, although I think her not mentioning those particular enthusiasms are more defensible. In a narrative sense.)

Still, all that falls under the heading of We Don't Get To Have Heroes: the people who have access to the means of production are usually the ones who have blind spots around their own privilege. Like me! That's hardly news.

So let's talk about Laura Jane Grace.

I feel like punk rock orthodoxy dictates that I should be mad at her for selling out or whatever, but I don't. I'm not really a fan of her music, but that's not a criticism. I don't think everyone in the world should listen to transgender supremecist blackened crustgaze or whatever the fuck it is that I like, so I think it's okay for me to say that the folk punk she used to play was folk punk, which is not for me, and now the rock music she plays also feels like it's not really for me.

I guess some people have been giving her shit for, like, not being wise enough about trans stuff? Like people have talked shit on her for saying the kinds of things that people who have just transitioned always say, or something. But that's not my critique, and I think that's actually a pretty fucked up critique. You get to say whatever you want to say about wherever you're at and if anybody doesn't like it, let's take it out on young white men from privileged backgrounds who write novels about young white men from privileged backgrounds before we go after our only trans rock star famous enough to be on TV and stuff. I don't have a critique of her! I'm not even mad at her. Laura Jane, if you're reading this, let's hang out. Come over. I heard you're taking my friend Audrey's band Little Waist on tour. That rules.

Nah dude. My problem is this: I feel like the level of discourse she has to exist on is a bullshit level because she's famous.

I think when people get called sellouts; it's almost always kind of bullshit. I mean I think it's pretty rare that somebody is like "now I'm going to cash in all this good will I've accumulated in the underground and write bad music in order to get rich." It probably happens sometimes but I think it's probably way more common that bands change and as people become more accomplished or experienced at playing music and stuff, the things they find interesting about writing and playing probably evolve—and so they end up more interested in things like "melodies" and "chord progressions" and "production" and "bridges" and "mastering" than they were when they started out, when the main things they cared about were volume or urgency or whatever.

But that's not selling out. That's just getting boring, which happens to all of us. (See also: Sick Boy's theory of everything in *Trainspotting*.)

I don't even know enough about Against Me's music over the years to say anything about how or whether it's changed, except I guess they play electric guitars now and they didn't used to.

What I want to talk about are the conversations I see Laura Jane Grace having with pretty, skinny cis people—usually they are skinny pretty cis people who would have been welcome at women's colleges!—with microphones in the media. They always just want to talk about the exact same boring shit they always want to talk about with trans women. And as far as I can tell, Laura Jane has been doing a pretty good job creating wiggle room to say smart stuff in those interviews or whatever. But it's still not like anybody's asking her to talk about transmisogyny or anything. They're letting her wiggle in the same cissupremecist bubble that Jennifer Finney Boylan gets to wiggle around in.

But like.

Honestly?

I worry about her.

No: I feel bummed for her.

Because I know that the kinds of things that we get to talk about as trans women who play in punk and metal and otherwise shitty bands, when we go on tour and talk with other punk and metal and otherwise shitty and not famous trans women who set up shows for us and let us stay on their couches, are really fucking different from the kinds of conversations I keep seeing Laura Jane have. You know? While she's talking to Cindy Crawford on House of Style—or whatever the not-thirty-years-out-of-date equivalent of my old person pop culture reference point is; maybe something involving a Kardashian?—about her makeup and her clothes and if it's different to be a woman in rock from how it is to be a guy or whatever, I get to hang out with like Jenna from +HIRS+ and talk about the ways that misogyny plays out in queer communities or fuckin' get on stage with Screaming Queens, the band that my friend Kay is in—Kay who I met in Philadelphia one time and then we went to Anne Tagonist's house where she showed us radical queer trans zines she'd made in, like, 1996, where she was already writing about being a butch trans woman.

I just worry that Laura Jane is not having these experiences, and I'm worried that the reason she may not be having these experiences—which are experiences that no joke have made my life possible in a way that I had no idea it could even be possible before I started having them—is that she's famous. You know? I don't want to be like "rock star sellout" but I do want to be like, this actually is the reason that we reject fame or popularity or whatever: it's not because it's inherently bad to be popular or something. It's just that being a big deal means interacting with powerful idiots who want you to have their idiot conversations with them in public so that they can perpetuate the idea that these idiot conversations are worth having. And that they're worth transcribing and worth broadcasting and are worth consuming? But they're not! Those conversations are bullshit and they have already happened—Chaz fucking Bono already handled most of these questions I see Laura Jane get asked. Fucking google it and ask Laura Jane something better! I want to see some radical queerdo trans girl who doesn't have a chip on her shoulder about fame ask about Laura Jane's political history or whatever interview her for a zine where they really get deep about... Like. About *fucking anything*.

Or you know what—I don't even want it to be a zine. I just want it to happen. I don't want it to be recorded or anything. I just

want her to be able to be a three-dimensional trans woman who's stoked on some stuff and insecure about other stuff and who gets to talk about it, honestly, with other people, which is hard enough when those other people aren't cis idiots trying to improve their own personal brands instead of actually trying to have human connections.

But that's what happens when you're on a pedestal. It's hard enough to figure out your life when you're just some rando trans woman and queers keep saying one thing to your face and doing another. I can't imagine being a trans woman who's talking to journalists all the time or whatever. You know? I don't think I'm actually anybody's hero but I feel like Laura Jane got put in this rockstar hero role and she seems happy enough about it but honestly I just wish she could be on tour and play a basement and fuckin' drink some whiskey with me or not and then she wouldn't have to talk in slogans or be a badass but could actually be like vulnerable and safe?

I just worry that once somebody is put into that hero role then they don't get to be a three-dimensional human being any more. Like I think about the people who inspire me and whose work blows my mind and stuff and I'm like...Annie Danger? Ragana? Kelly from Stickshift Recordings and Gorgon? Red Durkin? Victor Lavalle?

I get tattoos from Annie. I lived in her closet for three months. Ragana might tour with my band Correspondences. I sleep on Kelly's couch every summer when I go up to Burlington to teach at Girls Rock Camp. Me and Red have lived together a lot of times. I get to talk to Victor LaValle on twitter about John Carpenter movies sometimes! But while I know she's around, I like. I don't even know what I'd say to Laura Jane. It seems like she's having conversations and existing in spaces—both physical and cultural spaces—that are so far removed from my own!

...Although I guess she's touring with Little Waist.

I don't know man. This shit is complicated. I guess all I'm saying is that the rock star hero worship paradigm sucks—but you already knew that.

I guess ultimately all I'm trying to say is that these are the reasons I keep writing for *MRR* when I keep getting all these million dollar offers to do columns for like *Maxim* and *Cosmopolitan* and *Mother Jones* and *Slingshot* and *McSweeney's* or whatever. Sure the music's better here. But so's the conversation.

ENDNOTES:

1) Speaking of famous trans women, some white people have been like "what the fuck, now we have black people like Laverne Cox and Janet Mock as Leaders of the Trans Community? What about white people?" These people are idiots and, like, did they even see the stupid shit that happened when white people were our Trans Community Leaders? Also did you notice who was at Stonewall. *Come on, dude.*

2) I dyed my hair green and my girlfriend kept calling me seapunk so I broke up with her but she stayed in the apartment and I had to move to the bottom of a lake. Fuck this irony.

3) I think that's twice in three months I mentioned the Black Heart Procession. What the fuck is this—*Punk Planet*?

A few months ago I addressed the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the first world war. Now just a few months later, the brief attention paid in the media has already faded. Perhaps some museum exhibits will linger on in Europe. The media is quick to move on and history fades deeper into obscurity. The slaughter of the First World War scared a generation. Those who survived emerged cynical and had any of the youthful optimism and promise of the "belle epoche" beaten out of them by harsh reality. I talked a bit before about the artificially preserved "old order" in Europe. After the French Revolution, the reaction that set in sought to turn the clock back on any kind of progress that would give rights to the ordinary person, and challenge the rule of the old aristocracy and elite. The so called Metternich System after the Austrian minister of that name, ensured that for the better part of a century there was to be little in the way of political modernization and any move towards protest or rebellion was crushed with brutal force. This ensured that, outside all but a few liberal democracies of the time, progress towards rights and equality for the common people was constantly stifled. The workers movement which emerged in the late 19th Century was hounded by repression, censorship and persecution. The lack of progress through legal or political means or course drove many to seek more radical and violent change to overthrow the old regimes.

The crucible of war intensified or crushed every pre war ideology. It's important for us to remember that the value placed on human life was much lower in those days. We are used to a culture of the individual. We are referred to usually as consumers, rather than citizens. And our role is typically to pay into a system and consume to support the elite. In most of history the role of the lower classes was to serve the aristocracy as peasants or soldiers. The consumer system reflects a marriage of middle class aspirationalism, to the old idea of lord and peasant. This was not so far advanced in 1914, and the ruling elite of the day had little regard for the life of the common man. For example, in the first few hours at the battle of the Somme in 1916 the British suffered 60,000 casualties. That's more than the USA in the entire Vietnam conflict, but in just a few hours. Up a half a million men were killed or wounded in just that one of many horrific battles, and all for little or no strategic gains. The elite of the day showed such a poor grasp of modern technology and warfare that rather than try to innovate new tactics, they just applied greater firepower and more manpower to each successive attack. The resultant slaughter led to collapse of morale, first in the Russian and Austrian armies and later in the French and German. The soldier in the trenches and citizens on the home front saw only death and privation and the bond between ruler and ruled began to break down. The social contract based on repression and blind loyalty could not hold together under the strain of war. Russia erupted in revolution, Austria collapsed, and France probably would have as well had not Britain and the USA propped it up.

The chaos that followed the war created a whole generation who looked to violence to solve any political problem. In Russia the most authoritarian and ruthless faction managed to take control of the revolutionary process. While in Germany it was the authoritarian fringe of the right that managed to take control. The Second World War has often been described as a continuation of the First World War after a 20-year truce. Indeed, after all of the slaughter and sacrifice, the post war settlement (often called a Peace To End All Peace after the title of a popular book) only ensured that there would be conflict for generations. Even after the end of war and holocaust in Europe in the middle of the last century, the conflicts ongoing in the Middle East owe their origins to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. One of the major causes of the First World War was the Conflict between rival powers over the division of the declining Ottoman Empire. The cavalier division of the Middle East between Britain and France made no accounting for dividing religious and ethnic groups and the ruling elites imposed by the imperial powers had little in the way of legitimacy. The result has been almost a century of constant strife in this part of the world that continues today. The struggle of the people of the Middle East to get the same kind of basic rights people in Europe

and America have enjoyed for decades, has tragically led to more atrocity, conflict and deprivation. One could truly say that the bloodshed in Iraq and Syria are the struggles of the First World War ongoing after 100 years.

I MISS BELIEVING IN THINGS...

...that's what my friend Angela had to say when we were talking online about the recent death of former New York Governor Mario Cuomo. In my younger and much more naïve and idealistic days, I could actually watch a political speech and be moved by it. Well, it happened one time at least—when Cuomo gave the keynote address at the 1984 Democratic convention. That was the year that Reagan pulverized Walter Mondale, winning in 49 out of 50 states. Cuomo spoke forcefully and powerfully about a "tale of two cities," taking issue with Reagan's claim that this country was a "shining city on a hill" and that too many people were being left behind, that he didn't know what poor people in different parts of the country were dealing with, that trickle-down economics wasn't working for a lot of people. He said, in part, *"but the hard truth is that not everyone is sharing in this city's splendor and glory. A shining city is perhaps all the President sees from the portico of the White House and the veranda of his ranch, where everyone seems to be doing well. But there's another city; there's another part to the shining city; the part where some people can't pay their mortgages, and most young people can't afford one; where students can't afford the education they need, and middle-class parents watch the dreams they hold for their children evaporate."*

I found it inspiring as hell. I took out a piece of paper (it was in the dark ages before the internet) and typed a letter to Cuomo, complimenting him on his speech and saying that I hoped he'd consider running for President someday. A few weeks later, I got back a letter from him. It wasn't a form letter since it did address what I'd written. It could have been written by a staffer and it's tough to tell if the signature is real or was done with a machine but I was happy about it just the same. Like I said, I was young and naïve and idealistic—up to a point. I was also pissed off about what was going on in this country. It was one hell of an ugly time, starting with the mindless nationalism that was exceeded only by what happened after 9/11, at least in my lifetime. It was the summer of the Olympics in Los Angeles and endless chants of "USA! USA! USA!" when the Americans were dominating the competition—not hard to do when the Soviet Union, Cuba and other Eastern bloc countries had boycotted the games. It was more or less like an NFL team beating a high school one. I did an editorial in issue #12 of *Suburban Voice* in early fall 1984 where I opined about *"a disgusting display of one-sided jingoism, with very little attention paid to athletes from other nations or events in which the USA didn't dominate."* I mentioned Cuomo's speech in that editorial, pointing out his line about the *"macho intransigence that refuses to make intelligent attempts to discuss the possibility of nuclear holocaust with our enemy."* I mentioned the possibility of witch-hunts for those who question what's going on and don't pledge blind allegiance to the USA.

Ellen and I just watched a seven minute excerpt of that speech on YouTube. I should probably watch the whole thing because I just re-read some of the text from the entire speech and it's spellbinding. It's a top-notch performance, that's for sure. And Ellen and I agreed that nothing has changed since then. In fact, it's gotten worse. In terms of economic issues, it's still the same supply side drivel we've been hearing since Reagan took office and the Republicans, in particular, seem determined to eliminate everything created by the New Deal, as well as social and economic programs in the 1960s. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps, I've got mine, fuck you. A mantra for over 30 years, now.

It should also be noted that there used to be moderate Republicans who actually supported assisting the poor, especially in Massachusetts, where there were Republicans who were often more liberal than the Democrats. Ed Brooke, who was the first African-American ever elected to the Senate, was one of them. He also passed away recently and, while he wasn't exactly a champion of the civil rights movement *("I do not intend to be a national leader of the Negro people.")* and an article in *Time* magazine said he considered Lester Maddox, the racist, segregationist governor of Georgia and Stokely Carmichael from the Black Panthers to both be extremists, he was a champion of public housing and other social programs to help the needy, sponsoring the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Imagine any Republican doing that today. Brooke's politics were to the left of such so-called liberals as Bill Clinton or Barack Obama. Unfortunately, he did prove to be as corrupt as many (most? all?) politicians and left office under a cloud of suspicion regarding financial improprieties. I suppose I could say that doesn't necessarily negate the good things he accomplished.

Nearly 31 years later and possessing a much more cynical outlook, I'm not sure how wise it was to ever believe in anything that came out of a politician's mouth. I'll admit I enjoy hearing people like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders espouse strong progressive viewpoints, and they clearly echo what Cuomo said in 1984. Warren, in particular, has an engaging and almost folksy manner. Sure, those words serve as a balm to those who still *do* believe that things will improve for the lower and working classes, but it doesn't inspire me in the same way it would have in 1984. It just has me shaking my head that it's probably not going to do much good. I want to slap people upside the head when they say that Warren should run for President in 2016. Yeah, right, a liberal Massachusetts senator who was a professor at Harvard and lives in Cambridge, which has been referred to as Kremlin-On-The-Charles. To me, those are things to be admired, of course and I'd certainly rather have her as President than any Republican candidate (or Hillary Clinton, for that matter). I've told people I wish she was my aunt. Cambridge is on my short list of places I'd love to live if I could afford it. Scott Brown, who Warren unseated in 2012, kept referring to her as Professor during their debates, as if that was some sort of insult. That didn't work out too well for him. But nationally, many people consider that kind of academic background a detriment. Remember Sarah Palin denigrating Obama's career in academia?

I agree with Angela. I do miss believing in things. Some call it being a cynic. I call it being a realist. I'm still glad I have that letter in the drawer, though...

MUSIC TO (POSSIBLY) BELIEVE IN...

I've been reviewing a lot of hardcore lately, so I'm going to diverge a bit off the path for a moment. Truth be told, I'm always looking for music that brings a different wrinkle or musical makeup to provide a respite from the everything-sounds-the-same rut. SLEAFORD MODS fall into that category on their *Chubbed Up* + album. The two 40-something gents who comprise the group are doing something different. Observational rants—not spoken word, not rap, but ideas sputtered out as quickly as you can digest them. This is accompanied by a post-punkish musical minimalism—bass and mechanized drums mostly (executed on a laptop during live performances)—and it's hard edged, rhythmic and propulsive. Vocalist Jason Williamson's ruminations cut to the quick, with sharp wit and a whole lotta cussing. Williamson could be Mark E. Smith's younger brother—it's not

exactly the same cadence but it's a similar sort of curmudgeonliness and you hear the occasional sonic nod to *Live At The Witch Trials* and other early FALL stuff. This disc is a singles collection and they've got two other full-length albums that have come out in the past few years, *Austerity Dogs* and *Divide and Exit* and they're also quite good. I can almost guarantee you'll be walking around all day saying "JOLLY FUCKER" (or FOOKER) to friends, enemies and strangers once you hear that song. (Ipecac, ipecac.com)

Back to the loud'n'fast stuff, there's a trio of recent Boston releases. KOWARD have been around for a number of years (off and on) but *Desperate* is only their second 7". Ravenous hardcore punk that goes for the throat. Two fast ones, two at a medium pace, and with a pronounced Swe-D-beat inspiration. With Jesse's hoarse vocals reinforced with a potent two-guitar musical attack, KOWARD quickly make their presence felt. (Side Two, side-two.com)

SUNSHINE WARD include 3/5 of the final lineup of BRAIN KILLER, joined by Jordan Clarke on vocals. On the 7" pressing of their demo tape, the approach isn't quite as blown-out or purely D-beat driven as that band was but it still provides a heady dose of hardcore noise. There are remnants of what BRAIN KILLER did but a song like "Progress" has a punkier feel to it. "No Control" (which wasn't on the original tape) mixes noisy, bomb-like effects into the mid-tempo pound. Promising start. (Hardware, hardware-records.com; sunshineward.bandcamp.com)

2 x 4 provide energetic, old-school Boston hardcore on their self-titled eight-song 7". People from BLOODKROW BUTCHER, MALE NURSES, POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, etc., playing nothing complex, just rough and throttling songs delivered with all the piss'n'venom they can deliver. They're so tough, they've written their set list on an actual two-by-four (true story). My copy is a test pressing so hopefully it'll have seen the light of day by the time you read this. (Twerp, twerprecords.storenvy.com)

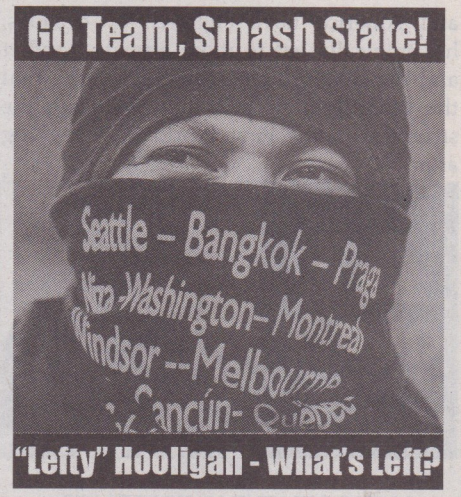
CHEM TRAILS is Jim Martin from BROKEN's latest band and their *First World Problem, Third World Solution* 12" is their vinyl debut. Jim's been around forever—not *quite* as long as yours truly, but he has over three decades invested in the punk scene, going back to when he did the cover art for the old *Connecticut Fun* compilation. As you'd expect, this is angry-sounding music. A beefy, two-guitar attack leaning towards Swedish hardcore but with the occasional metallic element, as well. The lyrics have a conspiratorial tone to them—the band gets its name from a conspiracy theory about chemicals or biological agents being dumped on the public—but, at the end of the day, they state on "Maniacal Laughter" that *"you have to laugh or you'll go crazy."* Indeed! And playing this sort of aggressive music provides one hell of a coping mechanism. (Vex, vex.rex@hotmail.com)

I wonder if there are still any SOFT CELL fans around. If they somehow ended up throwing SEX DWARF's *Non-Stop Erotic Noise Cabaret* on the turntable or walking into one of their shows, it might scare the living fuck out of them. Well, I love the song Sex Dwarf named themselves after (Soft Cell's shining moment, in my opinion) and this album, whose title is a punny take on SOFT CELL's first album, is pretty good. It's a full-on noise attack (natch) that might scare the living fuck out of a lot of other people besides SOFT CELL fans. An incessant, ear-wrecking distorted brand of Swedish hardcore buzz, accompanied by slightly-buried, reverb-drenched vocals. It'll grind your senses to a numb'n'bloody pulp. These type of bands are usually better-experienced live and no one should live on a steady diet of this sort of sonic tunelessness but there's definitely a place for it. (Konton Crasher, PO Box 393, Lakewood, OH 44107, kontoncrasher.blogspot.com)

PRAG, from Australia, also dish out some ear-wrecking noise on their self-titled four-song 7" although they take a different path with the darker-hued, early '80s UK goth-inspired "Winter Mute"—that's mainly due to the bassline but it's still wrapped in a barbed cocoon of distortion. The balance of the songs follow a thrashy route, with raspy vocals that sound like Darby Crash or Walker from CRAZY SPIRIT and possessing rawness and power (not so clever, I know) throughout. (No Patience, nopatience.org; La Vida Es Un Mus, lavidaesunmus.com)

Finally, there's SNOB's self-titled 7", which came out awhile back but I just managed to get my paws on a copy. This should be an addition to my Best of 2014 list. From London, with Ellie from GOOD THROB on guitar and she provides a whole lot of burn to their sound. It's darker and denser than that band—no angular scrape, no plucky bass. A hard-driving, fuzzed-out punk beast with some anarcho-sounding overtones and pissed-off sentiments. The vocals have presence but they're not that harsh, considering some of the lyrics, such as ripping eyes from the sockets of people who harass her. Better late than never with this review, right? There are some great bands coming out of London right now. (self-released, snoblondon.bandcamp.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, sonicoverload.net, subvox.blogspot.com



I woke up on Thursday morning, January 8, to learn of the massacre of twelve French individuals at the headquarters of the satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, France, by two other French nationals, Muslims who claimed allegiance to Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. This Al Qaeda affiliate which operates primarily in Yemen acknowledged that it had directed the Paris attack "as revenge for the honor" of the long-dead Prophet Muhammad, who had supposedly been blasphemed by the *bandes dessinées* of *Charlie*'s four famous cartoonists. Right away, I noticed that virtually all of the online stories and posts covering the bloody assault from major media outlets featured a video of the two masked gunmen fleeing their strike that looked severely edited. When I tracked down the original, full version of that video, it showed what was missing: the escaping gunmen wounding an unarmed policeman on the sidewalk outside *Charlie Hebdo*, then circling back to dispatch the policeman with a shot to the head as he lie begging for mercy.

This was just the most obvious example of media self-censorship in this incident, an act of squeamishness made more ironic by being contrasted in my mind to the regular cop-heavy American TV fare with its colossal—if fictitious—graphic body counts. Add to this the media outcry over the attack on "freedom of expression" that the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre is assumed to represent and the irony is complete.

Emily Greenhouse commented in *Bloomberg* ("What's at stake in Europe's response to Charlie Hebdo," 1/8/15) on the "complicated cultural realities" across the continent as illustrated by France. Home to the largest Jewish minority in Europe, France also has the largest Muslim population in Europe. So, while French president Hollande proclaimed a nationwide battle against racism and anti-semitism in 2015, "[f]or all of France's fine political abstractions, ethnic identity is inescapable. Everyone is obsessed with where everyone

else comes from. The French government tells itself that it doesn't 'see' or recognize race, so racism is impossible—but those are just words." Holocaust denial, as well as overt anti-semitic hate speech, is illegal in France as well as the rest of western Europe, but this is not the case with anti-Muslim or anti-Arab hate speech. Using the case of the French government's political harassment of comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala to illustrate the larger issue, Greenhouse writes: "It might upset some people that Dieudonné's comedy—at the expense, some perceive, of Jews—is illegal, while Charlie Hebdo's comedy—at the expense, some perceive, of Muslims—is not."

Charlie Hebdo itself exemplified this contradiction by, on the one hand, firing a cartoonist in 2008 for making illegal anti-semitic comments while, on the other hand, regularly printing perfectly legal, nasty anti-Muslim cartoons. Jordan Weissman argued in *Slate*: "So *Charlie Hebdo*'s work was both courageous and often vile. [...] We have to condemn obvious racism as loudly as we defend the right to engage in it." Free speech absolutist Glenn Greenwald goes the step further in his column "In Solidarity With a Free Press: Some More Blasphemous Cartoons" on *The Intercept* website (1/9/15). "One defends the right to express repellent ideas while being able to condemn the idea itself." Greenwald lays out this principle, which he heartily supports, while taking things to an extreme, which is his wont:

But this week's defense of free speech rights was so spirited that it gave rise to a brand new principle: to defend free speech, one not only defends the right to disseminate the speech, but embraces the content of the speech itself. Numerous writers thus demanded: to show 'solidarity' with the murdered cartoonists, one should not merely condemn the attacks and defend the right of the cartoonists to publish, but should publish and even celebrate those cartoons. 'The best response to Charlie Hebdo *attack,' announced* Slate's *editor Jacob Weisberg, "is to escalate blasphemous satire."*

Greenwald then proceeds to reprint some vile Nazi/white supremacist anti-semitic cartoons, as well as some of Carlos Latuff's more thoughtful, virulent anti-Zionist cartoons, in a tongue-in-cheek "solidarity." This is plainly a case of "what is good for the goose is good for the gander," to use an old cliché. Greenwald proceeds to lambast the suppression of ideas and the media's self-censorship "out of fear (rather than a desire to avoid publishing gratuitously offensive material)" and argues that "there are all kinds of pernicious taboos in the west that result in self-censorship or compelled suppression of political ideas, from prosecution and imprisonment to career destruction: why is violence by Muslims the most menacing one?"

Glenn Greenwald excoriates unreflective calls for solidarity with *Charlie Hebdo* in order to bolster his defense of the right to express repellent ideas while condemning those ideas themselves. I do admire free speech absolutists like Greenwald, while not being one myself. One reason I am not is based on "fine political abstractions" like not believing in the concept of "rights." Our "rights" cannot be guaranteed by some spook in the sky (God) or some piece of parchment (the Constitution's Bill of Rights) or some fanciful state of nature (which seems in conflict with concurrent notions of "the survival of the fittest"). If we depend on the government to defend our "rights," then what the government gives the government can certainly take away. And if we depend on ourselves, individually and collectively, to defend our "rights" through organization and action to advance our power, we come awfully close to declaring that "might is right." The idea of "rights" then is sorely lacking in any intelligent foundation.

My main reason, however, is practical. If I belonged to a minority group, and some other group of people were organizing to massacre me and other members of my minority, I would do everything in my power to defend myself and my group to prevent being killed, including denying my attackers their free speech as a tool for organizing their attempt at genocide. In a previous column, I defended Vidal Sassoon's history in joining the British 43 Group of Jewish war veterans in 1947 to streetfight against Oswald Mosley's resurgent fascist Union Movement, with the 43 Group's intent to bloody the Union Movement's members, shatter its organization, and crush its social movement. Individual freedoms can never be absolute as they are invariably in conflict, with my freedom to stay alive in conflict with some fascist's freedom to liquidate my commie pinko ass, for instance. If some Nazi scum were talking smack in preparation of wiping out me and my fellow Reds, I would not hesitate to shut them up to keep them from organizing and carrying through with their plans.

All of this is crucially important, what with the violence at *Charlie Hebdo* threatening to "fuel support for the far-right, anti-immigrant, xenophobic politics throughout Europe" and here in the United States, again according to Emily Greenhouse. James Neuger details many of the particulars of this supposed turn to the right in Europe, from the National Front in France to Germany's Pegida, in his article "Europe's Islam Debate Erupts as Paris Killers at Large" (*Bloomberg News*, 1-8-15). It is far too simplistic however to argue that Islamic terrorism feeds rightwing reaction, squeezing out "freedom of expression" in the middle. This is actually part of a broader polarization of European politics which sees the rise of more extreme politics on both Left and Right due to a number of factors, as correspondents from *The Guardian/Observer* sketched in "Across Europe disillusioned voters turn to outsiders for solutions" in November of last year. Listed are not just the National Front but also the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire in France, Beppe Grillo and his Five Star Movement in Italy, the ultra-left Syriza and ultra-right Golden Dawn in Greece, leftist German Die Linke as well as rightist Alternative for Germany (AfD), and the rightwing Sweden Democrats and Norway's Progress Party as well as the leftwing Feminist Initiative in Sweden and Danish Red-Green Alliance. Also discussed are Britain's UKIP and BNP on the right and the pro-secessionist Scottish National Party, the rise of the Socialists and People Before Profit in Ireland alongside massive popular tax rebellions, and the left leaning Podemas Party that grew out of the *indignados* protests in Spain in 2011-12 in addition to regional secessionist movements such as the Republican Left of Catalonia. The Left's anti-austerity and anti-globalization concerns are counterpointed by the Right's anti-immigrant nationalism, with issues like anti-corruption and secession ranging across the typical Left/Right spectrum. But whether Left or Right, there are aspects to this "rise of insurgent parties across the continent," to this anti-establishment, anti-EU upsurge, that mark a pause—if not a retreat—from the project of European integration.

How "freedom of expression" will fair through all of this is anyone's guess.

BAY AREA CONFIDENTIAL...

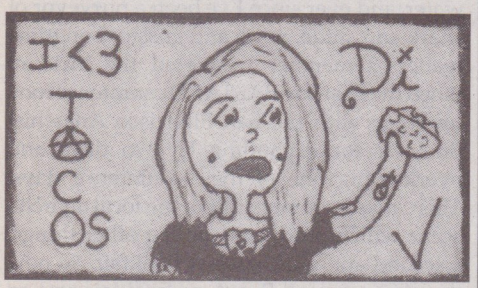
When Tim Yo started me out with my own column, I was one of the original MRR news columnists. He wanted my column to be a study in three dot journalism *a la* Herb Caen, replete with snarky news items and snide bits of gossip. I took to the format like a fish to water, and ever since I've been a purveyor of snark and snide, news and gossip. Longtime readers remember I covered the incident when the East Bay BASTARD conference took umbrage with the San Francisco Anarchist Bookfair for expanding to two days and overlapping one of their conference days. This caused a minor split in the local anarcho scene which produced, among other things, a second annual Anarchist Bookfair. So now there's an overall Bay Area bookfair and an East Bay bookfair every year because, you know, old splits never die and besides, there can never be enough time or opportunity to sell anarchist merchandise to the kids.

The East Bay Anarchist Bookfair on December 14 of last year was a study in bucolic harmony where the lion lies down

with the lamb, and *AJODA* folks staffed a table near one run by the Qilombo folks without incident. After the demise of Occupy Oakland, all of OO's myriad tendencies (pacifist, insurrectionist, unionist, communizing, squatter, decolonialist, etc) were in the doldrums, depressed, at a loss for what to do and where to organize, and hence prone to sectarianism and infighting. The whole *AJODA*/Qilombo kerfuffle that I reported on last year was typical of the internal nastiness that the entire Bay Area anarcho scene was experiencing. The Left tends to form a firing squad, rifles facing inward, when they have nothing better to do. But with the death of Michael Brown, rioting in Ferguson, Missouri, the death of Eric Garner, and protests around the country, Bay Area anarchos are no longer inward looking and focused on fighting amongst themselves. They're looking outward, enjoying an upsurge of demonstrations, protests, and riots almost daily across the Bay Area, and no longer battling against each other.

Suigetsukan Dojo's Girl Army opted out of providing security for December 2014's East Bay Anarchist Bookfair, so one of the organizers recruited a bunch of *muay thai* ruffians to help keep the peace. The verdict: the anarchist bookfair was so mellow it was boring. Just goes to show that it's nice to have a common enemy in the police and the powers-that-be to generate some scene unity, even if that unity is *faux* and forced and flash-in-the-pan.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I'm archiving past columns, and publishing current ones a month delayed on my blog, www.leftyhooligan.wordpress.com. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@me.com.



"Hey Kool-Thing, come here, sit down beside me, there's something I gotta ask you..."

...are you gonna liberate us girls from male, white boring fucking shows? My last two bands have been made up of all women. That was important to me and my bandmates. Since I am so sick of explaining why this is important and why I don't go to shows where all the bands are all men here, printed in this wonderful rag is why this feminist punk is so sick of the dude-scene:

"We're not a girl group, we're a punk band"

I've never been in a girl group. I'm not a Riot Grrl nor have I ever been in a Riot Grrl band. So please stop calling all-women bands as such. Nothing is universal but I can guarantee the vast majority of us hear you call us these things and as the words roll off your tongue we are envisioning you melting into a puddle of bubbling slime as you speak. Women are more prolific than a '50s doo-wop and '90s female grunge alone. I love girl groups, and go to oldies night at my favorite dive to hear the Supremes and the Shangrilas and I attend punk rock karaoke to sing Bratmobile and L7. But these are particular moments in the history of women who rock and to continue to label all female punk and rock bands as such is reductive and ignores the vast array of different scenes, movements, and genres that all women bands have contributed crucial works to.

Specifically with Riot Grrl, there was a unique esthetic, motive and method to the music and culture. Calling an all-women hardcore band Riot Grrl in 2015 is as misguided as calling the Evens classic hardcore because of their cast. Every minute difference in the mainstream male punk scene is donned a new sub-genre sprawling out like a beautiful ancestral tree or sonic map, so why keep women hanging on one branch for 25 years? If you don't know what a lady-punk band sounds like, call them a "punk band" as you would with any other band you were unsure which specific movement they are performing within.

I have a lot of angst here and I could get all "vice" with this, listing all the frustrations of being a female musician; guys assuming we are tag-along girlfriends, or incapable of setting up or carrying our own gear lead the way for most deplorable repeat occurrences. Honestly, there is a *lot* to be frustrated about but nothing quite gets my goat like being called a "girl group." It's infantilizing, it's often substituted as a genre, and it's not even a punk term. Asking what a band is like and getting an answer, "oh they're a girl group" instead of "they're a brutal powerviolence trio with two basses and drums" is a massive difference. Picture a flyer with bands listed and the descriptions read only: boy band, dude and lady band, girl group. Who the fuck would go to that show?

As with most issues in women representation in punk, it mostly boils down to a lack of effort from promoters and fans. It's easy to hear some fuzzy power chords, see all women, and go "oh they're Riot Grrl," but we deserve way more effort than that. That instinctual dismissiveness by men in punk is why, despite tons of rad punk bands featuring all or mostly women, so few get the attention they deserve. Some scenes do better by the women in punk they have. There were a couple venues in DC where if more than one band was all-male it was quite strange. DC has women playing hardcore, grunge, tender tuff dream punk, post-hardcore, post-punk, emo, and everything in between. While there is a connection between a lot of them, it's usually good practice to book shows with similar draw and so it's hella important to know what kind of music the "girl group" is playing to say the least.

There is a simple test for film's to determine whether a movie has any kind of women presence at all called the Bechdel Test. Here are the guidelines: For a film to bass the test it must have 1. At least two (named) women 2. who talk to each other 3. about something besides a man. Sounds pretty simple, but you'd be surprised how many films fail this test: The original star wars trilogy, the entire lord of the rings trilogy, and Run Lola Run are just a few, but the list is huge, and off 215 movies released in 2014, 90 did NOT pass this test. That means 42% of the movies released in 2014 did not even have enough female character inclusion that more than one woman can talk about anything other than male characters. In case it was not apparent, this test is not to determine if it even has a positive presence for women in film, nor to determine if it has strong female characters; It is a test to see if any women even matter to the plot without being solely a side note to male characters.

I have a similar punk-litmus-test of my own for shows. For a show to feature women in punk it must have: 1. At least one band that is more than 50% women and 2. no more than one all-male band. It is extremely rare I will attend a show that does not pass this test, because I do not wish to support something that takes no time to consider me as a potential attendee. Of course, I make exceptions for bands full of righteous dudes that slay, but I still feel shitty about it, because, these two points are NOT hard to meet. If you can't think of or find a punk band for your show that is mostly women you don't deserve to be doing shows. If most of the bands you like don't even have one woman, you aren't trying very hard to find new bands.

This is more a call to move forward more conscious that a scrutiny of the past. We already know most well-mown punk bands are all men, but that should stay a thing of the past. Men, if you are starting a band, it should be important to you to have women involved. Bookers, every show should have women making up at least half of the performers. It's simple. Women are a part of

punk, and if you ignore us you're a chump. Get the fuck out, or get with it, now!

YO WHAT'S GOOD, *MRR*?! Welcome to my first ever column. My name is Colin Atrophy. I'll have just turned 32 when you're reading this. Sun in Aquarius, Virgo Rising, Scorpio Moon, Venus in Pisces. I live in Queens, NY with three cats and a bunch of intergenerational succulents and I've been a waiter at the same diner for the past seven years. As I write this column I'm procrastinating making a tape for this person I have a crush on which I was doing to procrastinate finishing my radio show for this month. This is a triple procrastination. I often feel like an expert at not finishing shit. *Anyway*, here's my Best of 2014 list:

1. Getting my ear pierced.

On my 31st Birthday me and Salvatore, my best friend since I was sixteen, went to the Queens Center Mall and got our ears pierced at the Just Pierce It! kiosk by a gothic teenager who had a giant infected piercing in her ear. We figured probably no one in their right mind would let her pierce their ear and it was our duty as punks to support the underdog.

A few days later my lobe swelled up so big it looked like a tiny plum stuck to my head. One evening in the shower I decided to try to loosen the earing to get some of the pressure off. I got out of the shower and stood in front of my filthy mirror, slowly unscrewing the back of the mall stud. As it came undone I lost control and the earring flew out of my ear. I caught the front but the back went careening down the drain of my sink. No problem, I've seen *Degrassi*, you just stick a pencil eraser through the pin to hold it on.

I stood in the mirror and attempted to force the front of the earring back through my swollen lobe. I could get it through the front of the hole, but then it would just kind of scrape around in the flesh cavity within, unable to find the exit, like when you're trying to stick a pin back into your leather jacket and you can't find the puncture on the second layer of fabric. I stood for about a minute scraping the pointy part of the earring against the inside of my ear before I became cognizant of what was happening and puked right down my pathetic, naked body. As I was ralphing up my Breakfast for Dinner Toaster Strudel, the earring slipped out of my hands and fell down the drain. That's when I started crying, just blubbering like a little baby. I was looking at myself in the mirror—naked, covered in puke, earlobe swollen and purple—and I started mumbling, "What were you thinking getting your ear pierced?! You're not cool enough to have an earring. You're thirty fucking one years old! Get it together you *loser*!"

The next day, like a chump, I paid a Diminutive Urban Woodsman in a fancy Manhattan tattoo shop $30 to re-pierce my ear. I asked him what had gone wrong. "Hwell, " he began in his affected drawl, "When you get a piercing youf body sees it as a foreign intruder and tries to force it out. It's a battle of wills between your body and your mind to see whether the earring stays. Seems like your body won." Damn, gurl. Why you gotta be so rude?

But the second earring stuck and now I have a lil danglin' dagger hanging there so when I wear my leather jacket I look like Your Friend's Cool Step Dad, and that's pretty alright. Furthermore, I think that moment of solitary humiliation—naked, crying, covered in puke, berating my own reflection—followed by the social humiliation at the hands of the Tiny Woodsman, was very important in keeping me humble this year and keeping things in perspective.

2. Finishing a book.

Three-ish years ago I started writing a book for a huge publisher (which I won't mention here because this is about punk stuff) because they liked my fanzine, *Slice Harvester*, which was about eating a plain slice at every pizza parlor in Manhattan. For all you dipshits from elsewhere, "a plain slice" is what small town yokels call "cheese pizza."

I had just quit drinking *for real* for the first time after spending the decade from 18-28 largely blacked out, or so hungover I couldn't really get out of bed without puking, and I still approached the world with trepidation. I was really scared about taking on such a seemingly monumental task and I was terrified that I'd never get it done and that I'd just end up owing these people my advance back and I'd bring shame upon my family and friends and everyone would hate me forever because I just squander opportunities like a jerk. But guess what? I finished it in the beginning of November! Donezo forever.

Not to beleaguer the point, but remember how I mentioned in the intro paragraph that I often feel like an expert at not finishing things? I'm starting to think maybe that's an outdated perception of myself and I'm actually becoming someone who gets stuff done. Like, I was talking to my old friend Mya, who has been a super important presence in my life for the fifteen years I've known her and also happens to be a very powerful witch, and I was like, "who would have guessed that a loser like me would finish a whole book? I never finish *anything*."

And she was like, "Well you finished eating all that pizza. And you finished drinking; that's two very big things."

And it's like, maybe this image I have of myself as someone who starts stuff but doesn't get it done isn't just a holdover from when I was like that but it's also a pernicious tool of the capitalist hetero-patriarchy trying to keep me from taking responsibility for myself because "I'm just like that," or whatever. Does that even make sense? Like, if not finishing stuff is an innate and fundamental part of who I am then when someone asked me to do something and I let them down it's not *my* fault, it's their fault for asking me in the first place! You see how this is problematic and definitely worth interrogating? So I guess what I'm saying is that from now on I'm a person who finishes shit and if I don't I'll take the blame.

3. Some Records, I guess.

A lot of the time that I spent working on my book was also time that I spent hermitting—withdrawn from the society of my friends for the sake of my writing, but also because I was struggling with getting strong enough in my not drinking to start partying again without drinking while I do it. Like, last night I went to Cory and Carolina's house and I drank 4 bottles of Pelligrino and I won like, twenty-five bucks playing dice and a few times I said a joke that made everyone in the room laugh. These are small victories but they're victories nonetheless. *Anyway*, towards the end of the year I started paying attention to bands and going to shows again for the first time since like 2011 and now I wanna tell you about the stuff I like. WARNING: I'm still learning how to write about music without sounding like a corndog.

Nandas – *Demo* CS (self-released): Nandas are the only punk band in Brooklyn and I'm not just saying that because Dave the guitar player watches my cats whenever I leave town. The songs are dark and swirling, but not in a Goth-Is-In way. It's more likely due to the fact that these people are truly fucked up freaks and this is the noise they make when they get together. I can't remember if there was ever a *Sandman* storyline where they travel to some bleak, burned out, urban wasteland and meet a punk band, but if there was, that band sounds like Nandas.

(*Addendum:* I just got home from the Orden Mundial gig at the Acheron and I'm pleased to report that there's a second punk band in Brooklyn and they're called Mommy. In case you were wondering, Brooklyn also has two hardcore bands—In School and Ivy—leaving the borough with a whopping four bands total.)

Priests — *Bodies and Control and Money and Power* 12" (Don Giovanni / Sister Polygon): this record fucking rips and this whole band is my new best friend. Daniele is such a

powerhouse of a drummer and also describes films and art with such an earnest excitement and engagement that you get excited about them too, even if it's stuff you had previously felt arbitrarily judgmental about. Taylor's kinetic, danceable bass parts are maybe the most fundamental part of the Priests Sound as far as I'm concerned, not to mention they have the most guileless Brooding Hunk From A Teen Sitcom aesthetic of anyone I've ever met. Gideon's guitar playing is so dexterous and lithe I'm not sure if Jaguar is his given name or a punk name he earned from shredding like a jungle cat, and when he's on stage he moves like a backup dancer from one of the gang scenes in West Side Story. Katie is one of the most captivating singers I've ever seen, hands down, and the refrain to the second song on this record ("you put your fingers in other people's mouth's all day, don't you doctor?") is my favorite single sentence anyone wrote this year, and though she'd be quick to tell you she was ripping off someone or another, I still say give credit where credit's due. Long and short of it is: get this record.

Good Throb — *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim): OH MAN. This fucking record is definitely tied with Priests for the best record I've heard in like a hundred years and is equally responsible for getting me out of the house again. I kept comparing it to Huggy Bear because I'm not good at music talk and there's these sick staccato guitars and a lady screaming at me in a British accent, but then I played it for Buddha when he was in town last week and he was like, "*Woah*, Colin, this sounds like the Dicks." And all of a sudden I found myself paying attention to the guitars in a way I hadn't before, and listen: he was right. The official Eat Pray Shlub Stance on Good Throb is that Good Throb Fucking Rule. If you don't like this band you aren't punk.

4. Okay, Bye!

Aaaaaaand, I think that's it for this column! I'm typing out this sign off as I listen back to that crush mixtape to make sure I did it right. First track is Frank O'Hara reading "Having A Coke With You" and the second track is Lil' Kim "Crush on You (Remix)." You think this person is gonna get the hint?

Thanks to Grace for asking me to write this. Peace to Imogen, Bryony, and Greg Harvester because that's my homegirls on staff here. I been reading *MRR* for more than half my life and I'm stoked to be a part of this weird world.

Yusuke Okada from the band Suspicious Beasts drew my column header. Look at his art at yusuke1234.tumblr.com. And if you wanna write me a letter hit me at: Colin Atrophy / 442-D Lorimer St #230 / Brooklyn, NY 11206 or sliceharvester@gmail.com. If you wanna hear my radio show or read my old pizza reviews, they're all up at sliceharvester.com. And that's it! No cops, no creeps, peace in the pizzeria.

Watts! What?

If you're playing an electric guitar or bass, I assume that one day in your life you ended up asking yourself this tricky question: "How powerful does my amplifier need to be?" One would probably think: "I should go with a 50 watts or 100 watts Marshall amp, because that's what everyone is playing on since day one." The other answer that beginners usually come up with is: "The more watts the better, so I'll take them all. I should be enough with 300 watts." I admit that I've never been guilty of the first one, but I've done the second, for sure.

I can't really come up with a definitive answer on this topic, because it is all up to your taste. But it is also mainly related to the strength of the drummer you're playing with. If you have a heavy and aggressive drummer, you'll need a more powerful amp than if your drummer plays soft and sweet, with less strength. As for now, I can only come to the conclusion that, you need enough watts to compete with your drummer.

It is definitely not about volume or sound, but more about strength. That's the reason why we are talking about watts and, by the way, about power. Volume is mostly related to the speakers you play with and that's what I'll write about in the second chapter of this column.

Regarding power and wattage, you have a lot of options, from 5 watts to 500 watts. Some will tell you that 30 watts is more than enough, especially if you play with a microphone in front of your amp, while some other think that only a 100 watts amp is real. The only thing I know for a fact, is that you have, obviously, two reasons to use a powerful amp:

First one is to have more bass frequencies. The more watts you have, the better the low frequency spectrum will be reproduced by the amp. That is one of the reasons bass players tend to use 200 or 300 watts. It takes a lot more watts to achieve their purpose.

The second thing I can vouch for is that a 100 watts amp will smash your audience. If you play an aggressive style of music, and want to make it painful for the audience, you really need a big amp.

On the other side of things, I found myself playing with 15 or 30 watts amps and it was all fine and really nice. In my main punk band, I play a 50 watts amp, and it feels great and plenty. I have more than enough power to play along with my drummer, yet it feels aggressive enough to smash the audience without turning them deaf.

In the end it's up to your drummer's strength and to your taste. But, all in all, the only thing I am sure of is that, in a live set up, especially in a small venue, playing on a guitar amp that is above 100 watts is overkill, and the only thing you will achieve is being the only one from your band who will be heard by the crowd.

Speakers are everything

If I had only one point to make to the entire world, it would be this: "Whatever you're playing on, speakers are what matter the most". The last time we recorded with my band, I had to borrow a cabinet with unknown speakers, and I was kind of worried about it. The guy who holds the bass duties in my band came to me and said: "Why do you bother? You have a great guitar and a great amp head, so speakers won't really matter in the end, will they?" How wrong he was, he quickly discovered from looking at my face.

If we take a look at the signal chain of an electric guitar, it goes from the movement of the strings, which is turned into a current by the pick-ups, and then the whole electrical signal is sent to the amp to be amplified. At the end of the signal chain you'll find the speakers, which are designed to turn a signal into a sound. So, they are the one and only step where that electric current that came from your instrument will be turned into a sound. If you get my point, you should now realize how important the speakers are. You can have the most expensive guitar or the most expensive amplifier ever made, if your speakers suck, your instrument's sound will suck. I have seen way too many good bands on tour with those terrible cabs that are loaded with awful speakers, especially for punk purposes. And the truth is that, most of the times, you don't really need such a heavy cabinet, loaded with four speakers when only two would be enough.

The power rated on a speaker is not the power that it will deliver. It is actually the power that the speaker can handle from the amplifier. The proper volume, or sound you can hear with your ears, is nothing related to power but more about decibels, often shortened to "dB". If you look at the specs of a speaker you'll find out a "sensitivity" section, which is rated in dB. This is the actual sound power of the speaker. So the higher the sensitivity is, the louder you will be heard by the audience.

On a side note, if you have a combo amp, most of the times, the speakers that came stock with it are terrible, because that's one of the

common things manufacturers tend to save money on. Do yourself a favor and upgrade your speakers first. There are plenty of cheap yet excellent new brands that are on the market now. We'll talk about speakers furthermore, but do yourself a favor and record, tour, and play with good speakers. It does really matter.
instrumentsoneohone@gmail.com

Continued from MRR *381…*

As GG Allin's stench continues to assault our nasal passageways, I manage to get the words to the question, "Ghost of Christmas present? Is God nuts?"

"Naw," explains The Geege, "He just figured since I was smelling up the place, and turning the clouds yellow and brown, He'd take a break to do some spring cleaning."

I inform the jock-strapped ghost with the words "Eat Me" written in Sharpie on it, that it is, in fact, winter.

"Coulda fooled me Tabby Cat," GG says, "and besides, He told me that if I can get through to you and help you, I may get my wings!"

"Now this is getting just plain silly," exclaims Elena. "First Tim Yohannan, your old editor, who I think did the best job, and who had some really yellow teeth to go along with Doc Martens and Flight Jacket. And Gun. And now HIM?"

"Tim was here?" asks the smelly one.

"Yeah," I explain, "He was supposed to be the ghost of Christmas past, but he didn't have much to say. Just smoked a lot."

"Yeah," nods GG, "That's Tim. Sorry I missed him. Now *that* man had a sense of humor!"

Elena and I nod our heads in agreement.

"So," I say, "Are you really gonna get wings like Clarence in *It's A Wonderful Life*?"

"Ha!" yells the bald and naked human cesspool, "Gotcha! Ghost don't get wings, stupid. And besides, *He* would never give me those fairy appendages. *He* likes the boots better. Says it gives me 'Class'".

"Oh," I exclaim, "that's funny because I always thought that…"

"Yeah, so did everyone else. My brother, Merle, especially. That's why he sells serial killer art and stuff, he figures he's already in the clutches of Satan, but now I know better!"

"Huh?" I say, scratching my itchy head and thanking God that GG is bald, because if he wasn't, his head would be a lice farm. They'd be working the fields, growing in that hair, making sure it was well watered, and once in a while host a party of fleas or scabies.

"When I first kicked the bucket at your singer's loft on Avenue B I found out." GG started.

"He wasn't *my* singer," I say, "I was out of Letch Patrol by that time. Well, in the other Letch Patrol with Harris, anyway. Not the one with Johnny Puke and Chicken John and those Jersey kids who took everything dead seriously. Especially the dope."

"Tell me about it," says The Geege,"I died from that shit!"

"Oh yeah," I say.

"Is this going anywhere?" asks Elena as Jett and Rocket bark in agreement. "It's cold out here. I don't mind you seeing your old friends, but can we go inside? And *not* in our apartment."

"That bad, huh?" asks the lead singer.

"Yeah," I tell him.

"Anyway, Tabby," explains GG, "I was sure I was in the firm grasp of Old Scratch, and…"

"Old Scratch?" I ask, "Is that a type of cologne, like Brute 33?"

"It's another name for Lucifer, "explains Smelly, "Beelzebub, The Dark One, The Walking Dude, The Horned Angel, Richard Nixon,.."

"Oh," I exclaim, "Satan!"

"Exactamundo," says GG as he gives me the thumbs up signal and winks at me and Elena.

"Fonzie?" I ask.

"Not there yet, but soon. At least that's what *He* says. Anyway, The Big 'H,' the place I thought I would end up. Like most people I know. But it's just full of politicians and lawyers. And residents who were still in med school working at an E.R. What a bunch of losers, and so fucking annoying."

"But what about murderers, rapists, and those who fuck thy neighbor?" I ask, now very curious.

"Oh yeah. If you kill or rape, he's got you tied up to the sides of that river, which is full of burning feces, urine, and UPS and Airline lost package claim slips," explains GG. "Which ain't so bad, especially for me, but when he drives by in The Titanic with those huge motors, well, it's worse that what those sick fucks did in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"Set off an I.U.D. and cut people's heads off?" I ask.

"No Tabby, that thing they showed on Fox. Geraldo, who I got to meet, even did it." Says GG, "Water boarding! That's it!"

"Sounds awful," I say.

"It is," says Smelly. "Or they put you in a room with a thousand naked virgins and."

"Is God's name, Allah," I ask, impatiently.

"Fuck no," he says. "He puts you in the room with all that fine, fine pussy and then he tells you that you can't touch them or anything. You just have to listen to them talk. About their problems. And if you doze off, or don't pay attention, he turns you into an ant and puts you in front of a kid with a magnifying glass."

"Can't you just nod your head like you're listening while you get see and smell all those beautiful women?" I ask.

"Two Words, Tabby," says GG. "Pop Quiz."

"Drag," says Elena, who has entered the conversation.

"Yeah," explains GG, "and besides, I can't smell anything but myself, anyway. Now *His* kingdom. That's something. Gold buildings, gold plates, gold gold! He's even got gold toilets because up there, you shit gold!"

"Too bad you can't take it with you," I smirk.

"And that Jesus cat, what a hippie," explains GG, who is now on a roll. "He looks like your old lead singer of Letch Patrol, exactly. I'm pretty much sure they might be the same person, and.."

"Wait!" I exclaim, "Are you telling me the Messiah is homeless, bums smokes off of everyone, and writes bad songs about the poor, the human condition and love?"

GG just looks at me for a *long* time, then says, "Duh, yeah!"

I turn to Elena and say, "See, I told you Letch Patrol was more than a joke band! Jesus was our singer! We were doing God's work! We were on a mission from God!"

"You were just waiting to use that line since we watched *The Blues Brothers* the other night. And you know I hate chase movies", she says.

I look down at the snow and say nothing.

"Ha, Tabby," laughs GG. "Now I see who wears the pants in the family.

With that the dogs start to bark. Loudly.

"Okay," says GG, "Rocket and Jett, you wear the pants. You are the Alpha males!"

Suddenly the barking stops and the tails wag like crazy. Then Rocket licks GG's left hand while Jett licks his right. Then they both lay in the snow by his feet like twin Sphinxes.

"Yeah," says G.G. before Elena or I could say anything. "I can talk to the animals."

"Doctor Doolittle," exclaims Elena.

"Doctor Doshit" is more like it," replies GG. "They can only talk about so much. Food, mostly. And of course, fucking. Oh, and what other asses smell like. Now that I can understand!"

"So you are the Ghost of Christmas Present," says Elena, trying to get the conversation back on track.

"Did you ever wonder what monkeys and gorillas talk about?" GG continues.

We shrug our shoulders. "Food and poopies?" I ask.

"Nope. They talk about how all humans look the same and how you can hardly tell them apart. They also wonder why everyone

hates each other's skin since it all looks the same to them. And they really love talking about asshole scientists who give them funny shaped blocks to put in holes. They know damn well what to do, but they just can't help but fuck with those dorks in lab coats. Once in a while they'll say something in human language just to fuck with them. Or they'll whip out their dicks and jerk off in front of others. While they are dong that, they're laughing their little furry heads off, saying, 'Can you believe how fucking stupid furless beasts are? We can beat-off in their faces and throw shit at them and they just take it.'"

"Then you guys must really get along," I say. "I mean, you both do the same shtick!"

"Did," said GG. "Up there are guys who can take off their own dicks and suck them. Chicks who can trade vaginas for penises, or switch their asshole and vagina around. And then there're the guys with three dicks fucking the chicks with four assholes. And if you're gay, it's just really like the best backroom there ever was."

"You are starting to sound like Mykel Board," I tell GG. "Can you get on with whole *A Christmas Carol* stuff?"

"What *A Christmas Carol* stuff?" asks GG.

"You are supposed to be the ghost of Christmas Present," exclaims Elena, obviously exhausted from all this absurdity.

"Oh" says GG, "I just said that to you to fuck with you. I have no idea what you are talking about."

"*What?!*" Elena and I both exclaim at the same time.

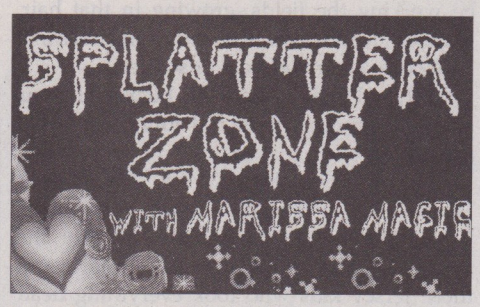
"Gotcha," says the Geege. "Okay, the reason I'm here is because…

To be continued…

ENDNOTES:

1) I'm sad to report that Brian From D.O.A. passed away recently. He was the bass player and also the singer for the Canadian Subhumans who did that great song, "Slave To My Dick." It's bad enough that Dave Gregg the guitarist just died, but now this? Also, Jay from Norman Bates and the Showerheads passed away. Now he and Jim are in heaven with the Ramones. All good boys from Queens. I'm sure they all hugged Tommy when he got there. Also, my bass player from Iron Prostate and the George Tabb Experience died. His name was Chuck. He was better known as Charles M. Young, or The Rev. Charles M. Young. He was a famous rock critic for *Rolling Stone* and other big magazines, and introduced the Sex Pistols to America. But besides all that, he was a good friend, someone fun to hang out with, smart as a whip, and so uncool he was cool. I'm going to miss all these guys.

2) May 2015 bring less death and more happiness like our Yorkie, Rocket, who was born in 2014, along with lots of beautiful babies! As the story says, "God Bless Each And Every One Of You".



I knew he was in town and I had zero desire to see him; every time I remember our last interaction my body rapidly fills with rage. I silently fantasize about getting off my bike and throwing it against a building, or punching a window, maybe roughly kicking some dust or pebbles. I was stuck in a room in a town I don't know; I showed up willingly only to be blown off for the price of $400+ and five days of my time including four hours of sick pay. The fuck am I doing. How could someone treat me like that; why did I allow myself to be treated as such; seriously, I am so fucking cool. (I mean this in all seriousness) I deserve better than to be scoffed at. So much fucking better.

I got a text when he got to town and I waffled in between ignoring it and telling him I don't make time for people who treat me like shit. Ignoring it would make for a weird interaction if and when we ran into each other. And I do believe deeply in the power of saying no, of making clear a refusal. As I typed out the message to fuck off I felt deep pangs of guilt, doubting my feelings and telling myself I was overreacting, maybe. I remembered him shoving me away, maybe. I'm being an oversensitive bitch, uptight, maybe. Maybe I shouldn't say anything, like the other night when somebody came to my house with their dog, this large dog that immediately jumped on my back and the person who brought the dog didn't even acknowledge it. I didn't say anything about the dog because I knew I would be placated until I left the room, at which point I would most likely be made out to be an uptight bitch and nothing would change. Maybe the power of no and fuck off is bullshit.

At some point I started to cultivate the habit of not saying things to people if I knew that I was just attempting to elicit a specific reaction, or if it would just be complaints on deaf ears. Why take the time and energy to call someone out just so they can placate out of the immediate and then go about their normal-ass way. Also I have zero control over other people, I can't make them react the way I want them, too. I started only saying things when I had to, not when I wanted something specific.

I messaged my boyfriend to clue him in about his band being on a bill with a certain local longtime piece of shit who people like to let off the hook because he went to prison for the murder of his girlfriend.

"He did his time."

Which, off topic (kind of) for a second (kind of): this is something that blows my mind pretty consistently. The general mistrust and hatred of the government, justice system, and cops is pretty fucking strong in the underground, but somehow when it comes down to people doing jail time for incredibly violent and awful things, or people being accused of vile shit by their community, why is it that all the sudden the justice system is worthwhile? Why is this guy absolved of his actions because he went to prison when the system is so corrupt? Why is it that when someone is called out for being a rapist or abusive or whatever else awful thing there is a group of people will always cry foul because, "No way, he's a nice guy" or a group of people will always claim that because the guy wasn't found guilty in the court of law he must not be guilty, or that he served the time so stop bugging him about it. The fuck.

So here is this band, this band with friends of mine in it, here they are finding themselves on a bill with a vile human being and his awfully named band. One could, whatever, play the show anyway, "Who cares." One could back out with a fake excuse or no excuse at all. One could back out with a flippant "Don't wanna play with a murderer." One could back out with a deep explanation of why they don't want to spend time playing that show, don't want to be associated.

I was watching this movie by a famous director who also happens to be a rapist and I hate who its made by and what a piece of shit that man is but, geez, this movie I was watching is gorgeous. I rationalize my consumption of this movie and in turn this director by giving as little as I possibly can. No money paid, no names uttered. Just me alone and this beautiful movie. This comes down to an age-old thing: if I rid myself of all of the art I love made by fucked up people I would have very little left. But I don't want to give the most awfuls my stamp of approval, and if these awful people exist in a societal echelon where I could be near them, play a show together, what have you, I don't want to be associated with them.

But this band I'm friends with was set to play a show with this turd of a human being and his current awfully named band and I was deeply hoping they'd ditch out (they did) because I just kept thinking "Oh god, please don't endorse that, don't play a show with them" because what I mean is that by playing with this band you are endorsing them and in turn endorsing a turd.

What I mean is I'm watching this movie by this rapist director and the only thing I can do to him is withhold funds. I can keep his

name (brand) off my tongue. My opinion of the director doesn't matter in a larger world sense and the danger of me being personally associated with him is nil. He doesn't exist as a person in my reality. There is a certain level of ownership that comes with localness, tiny communities, the underground, the punk.

And this is where it gets uncomfortable. Because however I feel about this rapist director I can't personally confront him, I'll probably never be in a position where him and I are playing the same show, I will never lose friends over it, it won't haunt me, I won't be labeled a bitch or hysterical or crazy.

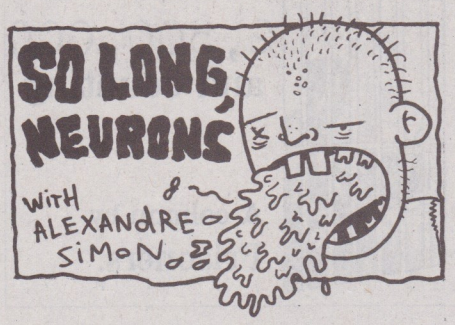
When the scumbags are touchable they can touch back and all of their fucking friends can too. In this it feels easier to say nothing because you don't want to look hysterical or (god forbid) lame or just a general fun crusher. You don't want to get beat up by meatheads, kicked out of places, pushed out of social circles, laughed out of town.

I was at a show and I spotted him out of the corner of my eye, I loudly blurted out the word motherfucker to no one in particular and then swiftly snuck out the back gate at the side of the house. I was sitting there at a show at my friends house and I'm friends with all of the bands playing and I knew I could have told him to leave and he would have left but I was bored anyway and I didn't care enough to be that confrontational. Instead I angrily rode my bike home and ate a bagel with an obscene amount of butter on it. I wasn't angry at the fact that I simply peaced out of the situation, I was angry because how dare he ever treat me the way he fucking treated me. And why the fuck did I take it.

But I didn't have to confront this guy, I've already done that several times. I wouldn't be telling him anything he didn't know already, that story had already been repeated a multitude of times over the span of letters and phone calls and text messages. He doesn't care about getting kicked out of a party he cares about getting shut out of my life. He'll figure it the fuck out.

I'll watch this movie by this shit ass director and I couldn't confront him about being vile because I don't exist in the same reality. He's got so many people in the world to faun over him, I don't think he'll ever get that he's a turd. There may be a fleeting moment of clarity, a moment when he realizes he's a piece of shit but it will soon be rumpled into "that was a long time ago" and he'll be surrounded by people agreeing with him. Apparently time is just as good as working to become a better person. Your awful wrong-doing will fade into the ether, like an unpaid bill after seven or eight years or a piece of fruit.

And this local piece of shit in an awfully named band, he's surrounded by yes men too, but occasionally we'll (one of us that can see the turd) have a chance to say it to his face. Will we take it? I probably never would because to me he seems like a waste of time, he seems like the type to laugh and call me a PC bitch and, for real, I have better things to do with my time then try to get turds to realize they are being turds. But will my band ever play a show with him? Fuck no.



Every year it's easier to make this list, not because there's less music being made, but because I just don't hear it. I think I bought about five records in the past twelve months? Regardless, this is what grassroots punk music sounded like for me in 2014, for the most part on the shitty speakers of a sorry laptop—sometimes negative / violent / misanthropic, sometimes positive / fun-loving, mostly slower and less HC than the years before. None of these should be a surprise to followers of this column, but what can I say… I ain't gonna make up bands, am I? In no particular order:

TAULARD – *Les Abords du Lycée* LP (Et Mon Cul C'est Du Tofu)
If you live in the Grenoble/ Lyon area, all these songs feel old as fuck—90% of them were already on the first demo, and that was, what, four years ago? So I don't need to listen to this record a million times to include it here; I didn't even buy a copy, just blasted those mp3s a couple times, but the point is, I know all of the choruses by heart, and some of the other lyrics too—it's embarrassing, y'know? These songs deserved a clean, powerful recording, and now that it's done, I'm kinda looking forward to what'll come next. This band is one of a kind, and non-French speakers will never really know why. Remember *songs*? Remember *lyrics*? This isn't "synth-punk," this is French music.

PERVERS & TRUANDS – LP (Et Mon Cul C'est Du Tofu)
I reviewed this record a few months back. It's not grunge, it doesn't sound like the BRAINBOMBS or FLIPPER, but it's muddy and slow, just the way grunge and BRAINBOMBS and FLIPPER fans like it.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal)
This band makes one want to scream "YAAAAAAIHHAHAHA!" while jumping around in their underwear, and for good reasons. Like for TAULARD, some songs were on the demo, but they deserved a cleaner recording (I said "cleaner," not "clean") so here it is. I also enjoyed the CONEHEADS demo, from the same crew I think?

MYSTIC INANE – *Deep Creep* 7" EP (Negative Jazz)
They want to make you want to kill yourself, but it doesn't work. For some reason this record always puts me in a good mood.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
What more can be said about GOOD FUCKING THROB? That they're the next SEX PISTOLS? The real Queens of England? That 2014 felt like GOOD THROB were *the* gateway band to underground London? Go read the other Top 10s if you need a sonic description, and please don't compare 'em to Riot Grrrl bands, they're as unrelated as a slumber party is to TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF THE HUMAN KIND. Word.

GUTTER GODS – *Innersense* LP (Cool Death)
This band treats hardcore punk the way Dadaists treated art and life in general—by making a clean break, following their own rules, and forcing you to think. You may not agree with them, but that's the point; what other band did we *argue about* in 2014? Yours? Mine? It doesn't hurt either that this record looks good, sounds good, and is as catchy as futuristic meat & potatoes HC can be.

REAL REGULAR – LP (Saucepan)
If they had another singer and another drawing on the cover, they wouldn't be on this list. Just saying.

RÄJÄYTTÄJÄT – *Awopbopaloopop Alopbam Räjä* LP (Bat Shit). The Finnish version came in 2013 but the US one in 2014, and I haven't heard the new album, so here you go. Also, I would have totally ordered the single on White Denim if postage from the US didn't feel like being punched in the gut by Uncle Sam. This is great music regardless, no idea how big they are in their small country, but a one of a kind band for sure, sounding like proto-punk and proto-rock'n'roll, before there was anything.

NOTS – *We Are Nots* LP (Goner)
It's true that they sound like the URINALS, but mixed with…LOST SOUNDS? BTW I think I've heard LOST SOUNDS only one time in my life, so don't take my word; but yeah, URINALS with synth from another future. Obviously they are ten times more relevant than the reformed URINALS, but anyone with half a brain understands this. I downloaded it last week and played it two times already.

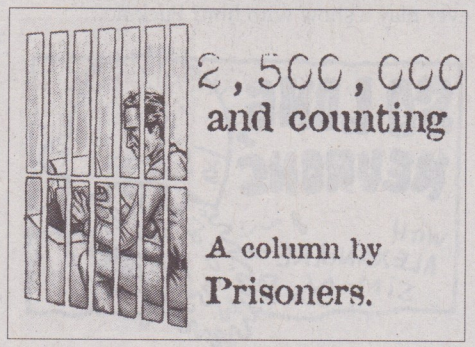
LIFE STINKS – "Portraits/Sweep It Under the Rug" 7" (Total Punk)
It's not really my thing to have a "current

favorite band", but if I had one, it would be LIFE STINKS. I still don't own a physical copy of their album, but if I had drunk a few beers and saw it for less than 20 bucks ppd I'd probably buy it. When I ask my mp3 player for a suggestion, he says LIFE STINKS 9 times out of 10. Just try it—it's true.

POWER– CS (Cool Death)
Some OZ youngsters (?) taking cues from GOD, AC/DC, the STOOGES, BLACK SABBATH, and who knows who else, making music that both your dad and yourself can rock along to. I include it here mostly in hope that they will record a killer 12" in 2015—I feel like this band would greatly benefit from a huge, clean recording/mastering/ etc. The solos are still inept enough to feel in punk territory, and while I'm sure that's not the point, I am sometimes reminded of a classic rock version of…PELIGRO SOCIAL? Anyway, this columnist is looking forward, young fellas.

DRIBBLE – *Lovers* 7" EP (Cool Death / Distort)
Creepy, catchy & inventive '70s punk. Do you realize how many dark alleys and dead-ends there are in Melbourne? Well, for some reason listening to "High St Girl" keeps reminding me of those—always the same image of bored teenagers getting drunk on the sidewalk before, after and during the show, then coming home and waking up the next day to do it again. This review doesn't do this record justice, but it's got great, rather subtle guitar work, a cool snotty vocalist, and like all the other bands on this list, it doesn't sound like any other band who released anything in 2014. Is that enough for you?

ENDNOTES
1) Live: ZONE INFINIE, POINT INVISIBLE, PERVERS & TRUANDS, LE CHOMAGE, HYSTERICS, UV RACE, LOVE TRIANGLE, SPRAY PAINT, HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERDHEADS (but let's hope "batucada-punk" doesn't become a "thing", alright Europe?)
2) Some cool mags: *Termbo* #1, *Neons* #1, *Distort* #54646, *The Believer*, *The Paris Review*.
3) Music documentary of the year: *Traces in the Snow* by Vladimir Kozlov.
4) Man of the year: Thomas Pynchon.
5) My 2014 moment of total clarity: realizing that Poly Styrene is *the* quintessential punk frontperson. Fuck Rollins, fuck MacKaye, fuck Rimbaud, etc.
6) Post-modern event of the year: North Korea and the USA on the verge of war thanks to a Seth Rogen movie. LOL.
7) Looking forward to in 2015: NO TREND reissue/ book.
8) Record someone should bootleg/ reissue in 2015: BASTA, *Abortus Vrij*, *De Vrouw Beslist* 7"
9) Newsflash – my fanzine/ publishing venture, *Ratcharge*, is no longer. Now could you please stop calling me "Alex Ratcharge"?
I don't even know who that guy is. Thanks for your attention.



I never thought I'd be happy ending up in Kentucky, but after a year and a half locked down at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in NYC, I'd take anywhere with fresh air and sunlight. That's FCI Manchester, medium security federal prison where I'm doing the rest of my ten-year bid.

Pretrial jails are designed specifically with harsh conditions as a tactic designed to stress you out into pleading guilty or cooperating. The philosophy is different at prison: with thousands of convicts doing long stretches, a balance is struck between spending as little as possible, making our lives miserable, and the need to keep us sedated and compliant. Whatever programming or amenities provided is never done so out of rehabilitation but to placate and pacify us so we do not sit around with nothing to do but contemplate our conditions, stew in bitterness, and plot against our captors. Many of the gains prisoners have made have been because of riots and hunger strikes and the relentless efforts of jailhouse lawyers filing administrative grievances and lawsuits.

Being locked up renews your appreciation for shit you take for granted on the street—demos and mixtapes, printed zines, screaming at the police at protests, badass vegan food—and you realize how important those benefit shows to raise awareness and funds for folks behind bars really are.

Arriving in federal prison in Manchester Kentucky, I found the standard issue medium security amenities: a yard, track, sports, basic arts and crafts, GED classes, carpentry, weight pile, and lots of TVs that play movies all day. But most importantly, what I been craving since I've been arrested: the band program.

I taught myself how to play the guitar my first fed bid. After enduring the daily harassment of work assignments, stand-up counts, controlled moves, khaki uniforms and other petty ass rules, I would get a few hours a day with the guitar, learning from old Guitar magazines and the tabs to bands like Against Me! and Leftöver Crack sent in by my twin brother Jason (himself now serving a prison sentence). When I was released, we started a ska punk band called Dirty Surgeon Insurgency with some friends, which recorded a few albums, played shows, and was involved in the Chicago DIY scene all the way up to my most recent arrest in 2012.

"Prisons should be places of detention and punishment…prison perks are bad public policy and a waste of taxpayer dollars," New Jersey Republican Dick Zimmer told Congress in a "tough on crime" speech arguing for the Zimmer Amendment, which has been passed as part of each and every federal Omnibus appropriations bill since the mid-'90s. It is the bane of federal prisoners: it says that federal money cannot be used towards upper body workout equipment (weights, pull-up bars), manuals, videos or classes on martial arts, in-cell TVs, hot plates, or coffee pots, rated R movies, and electronic instruments. The amendment was promoted as a way to prevent tax-payers from "wasting" their money on prisoners, but in the same year they opened up the new hundred-million-dollar federal supermax prison in Florence, Colorado—tax-payer money going to private prison contractors to build a 24x7x365 solitary confinement control unit, a practice considered torture by the United Nations.

The Bureau of Prisons went a step further and interpreted this to say that we cannot even spend our own money on these items as personal property. Existing equipment would be "phased out rather than eliminated," because "gradual change would minimize inmate reaction to the amendment"—knowing that prisoners would tear shit up if the weights were taken away. This was around the time many federal prisons went up in riots and lockdowns after Congress wouldn't approve the recommendations of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, who was finally admitting that the 100-to-1 crack/ cocaine sentencing disparities were flawed—an ongoing racist atrocity resulting in non-violent offenders doing decades of prison for drugs that the CIA was bringing into the country during the Reagan administration when these draconian sentencing structures were passed.

There have been lawsuits against the Bureau of Prisons challenging the Zimmer Amendment. A federal prisoner, Brett C. Kimberlin (who once apparently sold weed to Dan Quayle and other Washington elites), sued on First Amendment grounds arguing that, amongst other issues, without electric guitars he could not write songs with "vibrato," "long-sustained notes," and other effects. The DC Court of Appeals shot him down, ruling that the "punitive and

deterring" purpose of Zimmer was a valid penalogical interest that outweighed any free speech argument.

So no electronic keyboards, drum machines, synthesizers, and electric guitars. Many federal prisons allow you to check out nylon string acoustic guitars (steel strings are frequently stolen for tattoo needles). The prisons that do have band rooms with a decent setup use a combination of old-as-hell equipment that hasn't been phased out yet, or a loophole putting passive pickups on acoustic guitars.

The band scene here in FCI Manchester is as lame as you would imagine a small town in the hills of Kentucky. There are tight rules and schedules governing the use of the "electric" equipment band room, so you have to work your way in through the hierarchy and bureaucracy to get some time in. A few dozen people play out of ~1200 people here: like all prisons, the majority of the population are people of color, yet, the band program here is dominated by white boys. It's all shitty classic rock cover bands with sprinkles of '90s alternative and nu metal. No punk. No originals. It's like high school battle of the bands with grown ass men from Kentucky and Tennessee. Take my life, please!

The first band I played with, the coolest shit we did was covers of Rage Against the Machine. But I been showing 'em some punk. We've been writing some originals. Passing around copies of *MRR* (and other radical literature as part of ongoing effort to unite and radicalize fellow prisoners). Of course no one's heard of any of the bands mentioned in the magazine, nor will we ever be able to listen to them or record our own stuff (there's been no record or tape players for years), but it's all good, the whole point is to do it yourself.

In finishing up this article, some shit just went down here that resulted in a few people being locked up in the hole and a massive shakedown of the entire recreation area, resulting in the band room being torn up and shut down for weeks. Even though the incident had nothing to do with the band program, the officers are using it as an opportunity to literally throw away most of our stuff, while spending thousands on newer, less sophisticated equipment—quoting that bastard Zimmer amendment.

But are there signs that the Bureau of Prisons is entering the 21st century?: next column I'll review the BOP's MP3 player program and music store. (Hint: mad profits are being made by crooked alliance of private prison contractors and record corporations).

Shoot me a kite: Jeremy Hammond #18729-424 / FCI Manchester / PO Box 4000 / Manchester, KY 40962-4000, USA, www.freejeremy.net

"There's too many people saying too many things.
Nothing's done, nothing is changed."
—Antisocial, "Too Many People"

"Struggling hard to make ends meet
Only to be trampled under feet.
While Maggie laughs behind our back
We'll be all out on the attack."
—Condemned 84, "Survive"

"Beer and sex and chips and gravy,
It's all a Macc Lad wants."
—Macc Lads, "Beer and Sex and Chips and Gravy"

Cheap and Chippy Choppers

Boy-howdy did I get some shit in the mail last week! Unfurl the Stars and Stripes! Where is my baseball bat?! If Yul Brynner was a skinhead I guess that makes Joseph McCarthy a bootboy. The Gang as a whole has no opinion on outside issues. Each individual member has personal views and beliefs, but we get on as a group mainly becuz we leave out the ballot-talk, we even have a couple Communists in the Gang. I admit I don't really understand it. If you're gonna play at politics why pick that one? When we play D&D, I'm not a half-orc house painter. You get me? Chaotic-evil Anarchist sounds much cooler. That being said, I'm a registered Jörgensonian Turbönercrat. It's a simple, cut-and-dry philosophy based upon Centrist-Libertarian ideals backed by a Nationalist and Totally-Irrationalist view of foreign policy. And on the topic of Lars Frederiksen being the new Joe Hawkins, I am a Moderate. I don't hide my beliefs and I don't expect others to hide theirs. But I try not to let my morals influence my judgment of a person. It doesn't always work. Haters gonna hate and witches love drama and the Gang ain't no witches. We're just clean-cut American youths who love rad Oi!. And speaking of rad Oi!...

One of the shits we got in the mail was a LP from the CHARLEY FEW; titled *Punk Fire Never Die* on Mischief Night Records. Cheers are in order for the t-shirt they sent as well (Peppermint Patty with a chelsea). Let me be clear: The Gang ain't no corporate wimps. We accept Payola in all forms. T-shirts are cool as are drugs for those inclined (when bathsalts got banned in DC, we had a lot of angry freaks around here who lost their connections, hint-hint.) The CHARLEY FEW are from Philly, specifically South Philly. They make a claim to be the only active Oi! band in Philadelphia. I have no way to verify that, seeing as I am a Pittsburgher and am not welcome, nor wish to venture into that brother-lover city. They play street punk'n'Oi! with a strong nod to the punx. It reminds me of the PIST or ANTIDOTE. I also get a feeling of Japanese pogo bands like DISCOCKS or TOM AND BOOT BOYS, but not as fast or unhinged. They have songs about drinking 40s, hating the cops, the good ol' days, loving friends, staying punk, getting older while keeping it young. There are also references to riding bikes and skateboarding, which as a member in good standing with the Noble and Shaven Order of the Knights of Oi!, I find objectionable. Still, this is a party album that delights many of the spiked contingent here at *Casa de la Pandilla*. Get a copy in digital or vinyl at, thecharleyfew.bandcamp.com. Dot..

Finally got around to ordering NO RESISTANCE's "new" (it's a collection) LP *V.I.T.R.I.O.L"* from Rebellion Records. These Houstonian chrome-domes kick out eight head-bopping jams that recall the strut of SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS (they cover "Situations" adequately) and the sneering stomp of MAJOR ACCIDENT and the CRACK. A strong '77 backstreet sound adds melody without resorting to pop-punk or mod-rock schlock. The band owes allegiance to the Brickwall Firm, a support club for the Houston Dynamo. The opener "Sanctioned & Proud" talks of their exploits: "Flares packed cause we know our roots / Geared up from scarves to boots / Keep it quiet when it hits the pitch / Nobody likes a fucking snitch!" I'm more of a Scunthorpe United man myself but I will bow to the Brickwall Firm. The band is working on a new release for "early 2015". The Gang is working on keeping our boners in our pants awaiting it. Boner bustin' Oi! for boner bustin' boys!

I picked up a 7" from the Mexican band, SUN CITY SKINS the other week. I know next to nothing about the skinhead/Oi! scene in Mexico. I want to say this sounds like ULTIMO ASALTO but that's not really true. I've made the mistake before of comparing Mexican bands to bands from South American countries or even more inaccurately to bands from Spain simply because of language similarities. So here's to Vinyl 4 Bootboys Records, a label from the Czech Republic, releasing a band from Mexico and giving me a chance to experience proper Mexican Oi!. SUN CITY SKINS are from Hermosilla, in Sonora. Their record is titled *Viejo Orgullo, Nueva Gloria* which translates to "Old Pride, New Glory." There are four songs on the record, one being an intro. The intro doesn't actually go into the first song, so it feels like filler. You get, "Tu Realidad" (Your Reality), "La Vieja Escuela" (Old School), and "Frente en Alto"

(Heads Up). The drumming on this slab is a beast. Everything is tight without being over-polished. There is a dirty rock'n'roll feel to the songs. Vocals are gruff but not mungo'd-out. Great little record. Vinyl 4 Bootboys is putting out a ton of awesome stuff right now and much of it is limited. Try to get some of their gear at: vinyl4bootboys.bigcartel.com

The sketchmeisters in CLOSE SHAVE have a new album out on Rebellion Records and Rebel Sound, *Bad Reputation*. It is a straight up skinhead record! Chock full of classic topics like poseurs, people trying to slander Oi! with bogus political labels, the pub (that's a *bar*), terrorist threats, the nation (the way it was, and the way it is) and a pro-soldier/anti-war tune that a lot of these political peniswrinkles on the left and right could learn something from. Put a torch to the politicians, not the flag. CLOSE SHAVE make no excuses for their past, but they also don't care that I have a problem with it: from *Won't Say Sorry*, "We've made mistakes along the way / Tried to get a break, tried to have our say / And here's one thing that I won't do / I won't say sorry to a fool like you." There is nothing sketchy on the album, but if the hidden, inner thoughts of the members of CLOSE SHAVE make you angry or uncomfortable I would advise not purchasing this record. I think a valid reason to pass on this LP is that it's filled out with three cover tunes that are uninspiring: COXSONE DODD's "You're Wondering Now," a useless version of the MISFIT classic "Attitude," and ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE's, "Can't Stand Rock'n'Roll" gets some fresh paint as "Can't Stand Northern Soul" which is kind of funny.

There is a skinhead contingent that fetishizes this idea of *what it was like*. Let it be known the Gang is not part of that pack. We have no idea what it was like. We belch to our own tune. We want fresh wine! Not no more of this old stuff. We want to take the future with a baseball bat... By listening to and creating music that most of the time strictly references itself and its past. What a confusing and interesting subculture, eh?

My biggest complaint about this record and a lot of the "real Oi!" that is being put out right now is how defensive it is. There are twelve tracks on this album. Three are covers. Out of the nine originals, three of those are about what a pain in the ass the "PC" community is. Stop wearing SKULLHEAD shirts in pictures and maybe antifa nerds will stop calling in bomb threats to your shows. Or not… Those kids get sand in their ureters and it never gets out. Ol' Skrooge said playing rock'n'roll music was probably gonna get them banned. And that was in 1977. It all seems like old hat to be whining about in 2015.

What's left? A member of the Gang just threw the *Subculture Street Trooper* EP at my head. I finally get to talk about CONCRETE? I have been seriously procrastinating in my life while on winter unemployment; lots of L&M (laundry and masturbation). You put in a load of laundry, and then you have a great excuse to not go anywhere. Then you get bored and jerk off and take a nap. By the time you wake up the laundry is done and you toss it in the dryer. But you still don't have any clothes so you do something like fling ninja stars at the picture of George Meany that hangs above sink. Then maybe you throw on something like CONCRETE and you get real pissed cuz it's so angry and surly, but at least these dudes are *working it out* and you're just dicking around your house bored and in your underwear. It took three labels (American Oi! Records, Rebellion Records, Rebel Sound) to heave this brick through our collective brains. Side A, "Subculture Street Trooper," is a four-and-half minute slow burn that gets the Gang prowling around the edges of "the pit" (aka, the latrine), then falls into itself with hardcore urgency and sick leads. "Born to Never Lose" is the flip and is a hard-Oi! tune that sends dark clouds to CONCRETE's enemies ruining their days and making their nights a terror. Hammers to the sky!

We'll close out with a new band from Philly (uh-oh!), LEGION '76. They play American Oi! It's not cut with hardcore or mod-rock or redneck rifts just tuff catchy Oi! that would fit in between the BROADSIDERS and the BRUISERS on a mix tape. Their demo can be obtained from their bandcamp (legion76.bandcamp.com). We want more.

And that's all you bozos get this month. Go eat a sandwich.

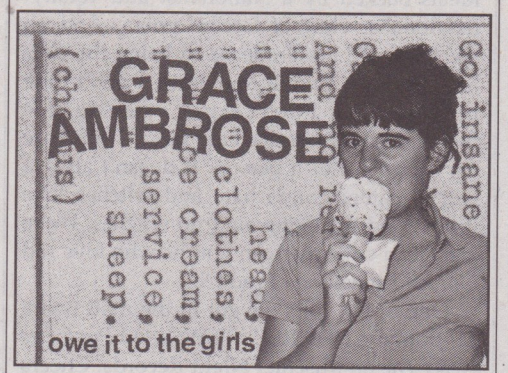
ENDNOTES:

+ A member of the Gang, Li'l Bit aka Trjegul the cat, took the rainbow bridge to Katmandu last month. She was well attended to at the end of her time. RIP. Always remember, never forget.

+ Give respect when respect is due: Go look at the OI! OF AMERICA blog (oiofamerica.blogspot.com). It's a regular stop for the Gang and me. We check our group LiveJournal page, update our LinkedIn bio, we check out the newest and grossest at CakeFarts.com and then go to OI! OF AMERICA. Best thing about the blog is that in addition to reviewing new releases (it's where I found out about LEGION '76) they also cover older records and releases other than Oi! Add in a critical eye for quality and you've got a top-tier resource for punks and skins looking to keep abreast of ace records.

+ The Gang wrecked some shit in Denver. Saw some serious LSD terror faces at the ITCHY-O show on New Year's Eve and heckled hippies while driving around in SmartCars. Denver is a weird place now. The bum to yuppie ratio seems to be 1:1. The logical end to that problem is daily, no holds barred, to the death cage matches between the upper and lowest classes. I volunteer to work the entrance gate. But I reserve the right to scream, "Are you not entertained?!" at all moments of the fight. Thanks to the broads at the Menstrual Mansion for putting us up, and thanks to the Denver Gang that still keep it drunk and nerdy.

+ Any and all comments, criticism, condemnations, compliments, and compromising photos can be sent to us at AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com. See yinz later.



Your poor ol' coords. The punks we asked to wax nostalgic about the year in music just couldn't shut up, so our personal Top Tens are relegated to the columns section. My regular whining about the unfortunate and continued proliferation of what I call "boy music" and soulless hardcore, and the tireless search for my willing and able future co-coordinator returns next month…

2014 peaked early. On New Year's Day GOOD THROB recorded their *Fuck Off* LP in one go. What follows is a list of records I listened to in between repeat spins of that masterpiece.

PANG – *Young Professionals* 7" EP (Grazer)

A record so good that it made me drop everything and move to the place that begat it—only once I got here, I found out that there is nothing left in this town (world?!) that even compares! PANG punished us all by breaking up (as the best bands are wont to do) but thankfully they left behind a perfect 7". The various members have gone on to other projects, highlights of which include MANSION (LP coming soon, courtesy of *Degenerate* ~~fanzine~~ mag) and PENNY MACHINE. (PENNY MACHINE is dead; long live PENNY MACHINE), but I still want one reunion gig.

HYSTERICS – *Can't I Live?* 7" EP (M'lady's)

I know I said I would wait until next month to talk about boy music and soulless hardcore but I just can't help myself. If you have to ask what boy music is, stop reading this column (and if you somehow think boy music means tuff hardcore, turn to the IN SCHOOL interview a few pages further into this thing and bone up). Soulless hardcore is insidious in 2015 America and is played by my least favorite kind of musicians: proficient ones. They know what the "right" pieces are and how to put them together in a way that is immediately recognizable as hardcore, but lacks everything that I love so much about the genre. Deadly.

I've always had a difficult time reconciling the machismo of classic USHC with my love for the musical form; I credit HYSTERICS with pulling me out of the post-punk fringes and back into the pit a few years ago. The band did a PANG and left this world, but not before releasing its best record yet. Devastatingly smart and furious, Stephie Cristol is one of the best hardcore lyricists ever, and certainly my favorite frontperson of recent memory. This was an important band for me and I am profoundly grateful for what the women in it brought into this world. "Please sir, I want some more"—luckily for us all, I think a few more missives were laid to tape last fall.

FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock)

This record only hints at FRAU's in-person ferocity—and it's plenty ferocious. My favorite rhythm section in punk, an explosive frontwoman, and a guitarist whose genius is shown in her economy (and ideological objection to the power chord), the band is planning an East Coast tour for later this year. You are not ready (or worthy).

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" 7" (Iron Lung)

This is emphatically *punk* music, but like none that I've heard before or since, an expansion of the idea of what a hardcore band can sound like. To plagiarize myself in a former edition of this column: "[UBI] makes me wanna pogo and shake my ass in equal parts." Then there's the matter of the long-rumored collaborative 12" with PHARMAKON, which I imagine to be an explicit engagement with the noisier and more industrial elements of the band's sound. I look forward to being proven wrong.

IVY – 12" (Katorga Works)
A too-tangled web of people and communities is both the curse and the charm of this punk thing. IVY wormed its way into my brain despite my well-founded and long-standing anti-New York bias and this record is certainly the most interesting thing Katorga Works and the like have put out in years. I still think New York is full of poseurs in well-tailored leather jackets, but I'll give them this one—endlessly catchy and hopelessly weird.

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – "Gnats In The Pisser/Ghoul Breath" 7" (Total Punk)
In April I stood on a kitchen counter in Brooklyn and watched a massive room full of naked, half-naked, and fully-clothed punks writhe around to LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS. The sax solo on "Gnats In The Pisser" was completely inaudible over the pop of the firecrackers and squelch of the slime, but everyone still grooved in all the right places. New York, you can have this one too.

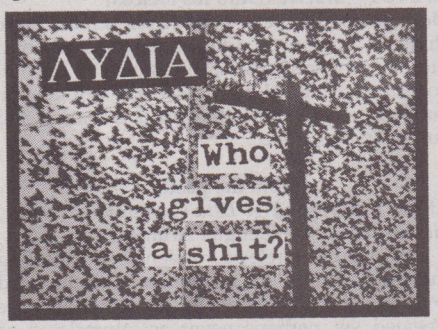
WATERY LOVE – *Decorative Feeding* LP (In The Red)
I thought Skull Music was dead but WATERY LOVE brought us the genre's greatest offering since *The Intern*. Punks in Philadelphia don't understand this band because they live east of the Schuylkill River and wear blue jeans instead of black ones, but they would do well to pay attention. You know how this LP has a song on it called "Pump the Bimbo?" And yet I still listen to it non-stop? Yeah. "Unlike you dickheads, I welcome death."

NOTS – "Fix/Modern" 7" (Goner)
It has been said a hundred times before and I'm not going to claim aural exceptionalism by trying to offer a different description: URINALS meets KLEENEX, aka Grace-core.

PRIMETIME – "Tied Down" 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
"Tied Down" might be the song of the year, but the other three effortlessly cool and instantly classic-sounding jams on this 7" are also fantastic evidence of the persistent vitality of the spirit and sound of UKDIY. If I still lived in London I would beg these women to let me play auxiliary floor tom in their group.

VEXX – 12" (Grazer/M'lady's)
I just wrote a check for my first month of rent on a practice space here in San Francisco. I'm sure to write more in this column at a later date about the hegemony of practice spaces in this city and their stranglehold on creativity, but for now I'll just let you know that my first order of business is to lock myself in there and just play drums along to this record over and over and over again.

ENDNOTES:
1) Thanks to PIG DNA for crafting this cover. Fuckers very near and dear to my heart, and if this Top Ten could be a Top Twenty…
2) If you somehow aren't a subscriber to this magazine, you're missing out on the glory of the subscribers-only perks, the most recent of which is a deliciously oozing full color wall calendar designed by Lumpy of LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS. Not too late to freak out squares everywhere…subscribe now! See store.maximumrocknroll.com for details.
3) The next issue of the mag is the all art and comics one—it comes with a sick poster and the visual excrement of punk artists and cartoonists worldwide. Thanks to Alex Simon [*not* Ratcharge!] for all of his hard work organizing it.
4) Welcome to Eli Wald, our new distribution coordinator. Write to him at distro@maximumrocknroll.com with any questions you have about how to get your filthy hands on this rag.



Year in Review
Oh my what a year it has been! With job changes and trips, baseball games and ferry rides, crossing The Bridge, burning others; radio shows and tons of live shows, surfing and bowling, bawling and laughing, readings and hangovers, zines and making new friends. Friends from Brazil, Spain, Japan and Malaysia, Peru, Indonesia, Mexico, Italy, Finland and more. I feel most inept to discuss record with your right now. Something about what's happening in the world sheds a different light on our everyday activities. Things we take for granted gone in a flash. People with us one moment and gone the next...

The release that blew my mind the most, and that I listened to on repeat, was the MUERTE tape! I gushed about it in a previous issue, but just so the record is straight, that was my #1 release for 2014. I feel very grateful that I had the opportunity to be exposed to so many new records and lovely people this year, so I consider it an honor and privilege to be able to compile this list of humble picks. In alphabetical order.

Langspielplatten & 12"

BISHOPS GREEN – LP (Rebellion / Longshot / Contra / Bords de Seine / Bandworm / Randale)
I do like myself some Oi! every now and then—not the meat-headed, stomping tantrum kind mind you. BISHOPS GREEN blend just enough melody with just enough aggression and vocals that cry out perfectly over the memorable hooks and riffs. Ideal for: tumbling around in the pit, walking home alone after the show, walking out of a bad situation.

COPYCATS – *An Idea Died* (Ccats)
A catchy record with a myriad of reference/kick-off points, a pleasant discovery from Andalusia, this is new yet familiar, cheeky yet conscientious. Early punk fans take note. Ideal for: alphabetizing your record/book collection, making food with friends, beer under the sun, house parties.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
What to say about this that has not already been said? Perfect punk vocals, ideal parts disheveled and cerebral, angry and as sharp as a needle piercing your eardrum. One of the best bands in the UK right now. Ideal for: whacking someone over the head with a cricket bat, throwing darts at a picture of Maggie Thatcher, robbing a bank.

JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numancia* (Beat Generation / La Vida Es Un Mus)
I fell for this record straight away. There is something about the expertly poppy, familiar songwriting and emotive, sing-along vocal melodies that pull at my heartstrings. Bittersweet and melancholic, like a doomed to fail relationship. You really don't want to leave, but it'll hurt much more if you stay. Ideal for: Home-alone wine sessions, driving around singing at the top of your lungs, bedroom dancing, goodbye kisses.

KOMPLOTT – *Sei Vivo, Sei Morto A Nessuno Importa* (Complotto Autoproduzioni)
Like the sound of a thousand execution cannons, this record is furious. Blown-out and massive, its blast flattens you against the wall. This looks and sounds top-notch. This is the sound of my migraine. Ideal for: shooting a firearm, instigating a fight, helicopters crashing into each other.

ORDEN MUNDIAL – *Obediencia Debida* (La Vida Es Un Mus)
An established killer record. Alternating between slow moving and ominous-sounding, and unstoppably angsty and positively manic, this record ambushes you and goes by in one fell swoop. Ideal for: no breaks on your bike, smashing bottles, outdoor plaza shows, fighting with someone and knowing you're right.

RAKTA – 12" (540 / Dama de Noite / Nada Nada)
The finest group of ladies I met this year, RAKTA create some earthly post-punk that eagerly explores sound as much as it exploits it. The final result is a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts, as this oozes with the energy of old souls channeled through amps and keyboards. Ideal for: dabbling in divination, meditating bad energy away, creative projects, casting curses.

TAULARD – *Les Abords du Lycée* (self-released)
Probably the record with the most character I heard this year. A definitively well-rounded effort, from the lyrics and artwork to the song structures and quirky elements throughout—keyboards and sad little notes creep in and lodge themselves like a lump in your throat. Quintessentially French-sounding—if that concept exists anywhere else outside my head—a glimpse at something different and extremely appealing. Ideal for: sad clowns, playwright reading, wine-fueled political debate, breaking up.

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* (Cintas Pepe)
A grand group from Mexico, playing straightforward and distressed punk; sincere and to the point, the spirit lives deep in their bones and their music wedges itself under your skin like a splinter. I don't need to say this is political and far from whatever trend-wave punks are riding these days. This is the real thing. Ideal for: freaking out in public, smashing windows, tumbling down stairs.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* (Iron Lung)
Yes, this record would go on once in the morning and come off again once the day was over. Soothing, repetitive, minimal, eloquent, imaginative, well-orchestrated, purposeful, daring, dreamy, uncompromising. All these words could describe this record but they'd still fall flat. There were days when I actually *had* to listen to "Liberal Party" first to be able to go about my day; the sax and ENO-like ambience offering an escape route to sanity and peace in a world crumbling with madness and disorder. Like a drug that makes everything go away. Ideal for: floating on clouds, sex in museums, ironed clothes, wannabe intellectuals.

Extended Plays

ACID BABY JESUS – *Vegetable/Brain Damage in Athens City* (Slovenly)
A warmly accepted record, if anything for the fact that it reminds me of home. A deliriously charming VELVET UNDERGROUND feel, mixed with some '20s *rebetiko* swagger to it. ACID BABY JESUS are enjoying their evolutionary trip down whatever rabbit hole they fell through a few years ago, and I'm equally enjoying the results. Ideal for: sandy beaches and hilltop views, Turkish coffee and weed in pillow-littered lounges, the sun shining through the leaves, inner city bar hopping, a ménage à trois on LSD.

ARREST – *La Poli Bastarda* (No Nostalgia)
An excellent first release, with lots of memorable songs and catchy sing-along parts. Smart musicianship, unafraid to mix things up and a beautiful look/feel to the whole thing. Ideal for: creative activities, walking around in the setting sun, exploring abandoned libraries, mixtape material for friends in far off places.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* (Not Normal)
Yes, this made it on of course. It's well-recorded and zealously performed, with an appealing anti-intellectual veneer adding to the songwriting's full-force effect. Created by punk youths unafraid to push themselves, unabashedly playing what they want to hear. A shining moment for USHC. Ideal for: picking your nose, pizza for breakfast, telling your boss to shove it, pissing in public.

D.H.K. – *Extinciön* (Hysteria)
I love Peruvian punk and D.H.K.' have been leading the way for a few years now. An excellent follow up to 2013's *La Krudeza No Muere*, this is top-notch (so rather shitty sounding), blown-out, political D-beat hardcore punk. This is vicious and fervent! Ideal for: running headfirst into a crowd, screaming at the mirror, trashing cop cars, your world falling apart around you in slow motion.

GLUE – *Enemy* (Katorga Works / Video Disease)
A venomous-sounding band if ever we saw one this year. GLUE encompass the dark afterthoughts of hardcore, dispensing copious amounts of aggression and intellect. Ideal for: late-night revenge, the anger stage of mourning, spitting in your enemy's eye, morning nihilism.

GUTTER – *March of the Dead* (self-released)
Plodding and grating, this is old school hardcore straight from modern day Athens, GR. Simple and effective, with hooks and breakdowns, a punk twist and a textured sound fitted to basement thrashing. Ideal for: karate kicks, jumping out of a moving car, punching fascists in the face!

PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical + Música Para Gente Fea* (CV)
These two EPs are definitely two records I would suggest you buy with your eyes closed. Catchy, brooding, agro and totally enthralling! Love the coughing at the start of *La Estafa Musical*, the gritty production, Oi! influences, the artwork, the attitude. Ideal for: snarling at everything, gettng high as a kite, pogo dancing with your mates.

RITUAL CONTROL – *No Affinity* (Residue)
Gripping, relentless and punishing hardcore with a frenzied twist and a dark edge. Detailed songwriting and feverish delivery, this has the force of a thousand galloping horses as they career your way! Ideal for: circling your room like a tiger in its cage, slamming doors when exiting a room, hating the pit, running with hyenas.

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" (Iron Lung)
A band of much charisma and raw energy. UBI deliver an orgasmic live show and their songwriting threads its way into the deeper layers of (your) being; a wormhole of forceful dark energy: Emotive and animated, captivating yet liberating at the same time. Ideal for: pondering the vicious cycle of love and death and whether any of it is worth a damn, tripping on mushrooms while staring up at the sky through forest treetops, headbanging in a trance, hot sex.

WAÑUY – *Muerte* (Odio los Discos)
More incredible raw punk from Lima, Peru! Slightly slower though equally as chaotic, rudimentary and radical. Destructive in the best possible way. Ideal for: late night drinking in public squares, hating the world, sweating and puking in the gutter.

From the past…

ALERTA ROJA – *Algo Esta Cambiando… y muy Violentamente* LP (Lengua Armada)
A most stunning release, undeniably appealing and sincere from '80s Argentina. A sound hard to recreate in this modern age, an emotion since repeated yet perhaps never as appreciated as when hindsight stirs the bitter sweet pangs of passing time. The final song on this record will forever send chills up my spine and go down in my book as one of the best songs ever written. Ideal for: thumbing through books with yellowed pages, riding around the city on a rusty scooter, leather jackets and neck scarves, reading war poetry, forbidden relationships.

CHARLES DE GOAL – *Algorythmes* LP (Danger)
French cold wave that sounds like it was recorded inside a damp concrete cell, with minimal beats and *textes tres triste*. Dripping through the speakers are the sounds of urban bleakness and post-modern nihilism. At times rhythmic, always gloomy and austere. Ideal for: staying home, hearts of stone, crippling misery, endless winters in houses without heating.

NAPRED U PROŠLOST – *Komunizam* 7" EP (No Plan)
Serbian agitation at its best, this is a fit of spasmodic punk energy! Falling-over itself with urgency, each composition has intensive spurts of despairing, protesting vocals, with choppy riffs that sound like they're the chaotic sound-map of a rapidly dispersing crowd. Ideal for: chasing cops, verbally extinguishing your opponents, the early formations of a rioting mob.

P.I.G.Z. – *Bloody Belgium* 7" EP (Ugly Pop)
A magnificent piece of punk history from Belgium, with trailblazing grit and scorn characteristic of '77 punk. "'Is this Democracy, or is this *blindness?*' [the singer] chastises and squeals, everything sounding charismatically shambolic but utterly electrified," I wrote when I reviewed this and of course it rings true, as this record stands the rest of time and is well worth a position in your collection. Ideal for: making fun of politicians, paint-bombing City Hall, boombox mixtapes, setting people's teeth on edge.

QLOAQA LETAL – *Nunca, Siempre* LP (Metadona)
A real surprise, a unique diamond in the rough, like an ugly perhaps dangerous creature found roaming the streets. Unhinged and dark songwriting, with throaty, beastly vocals, drum-machine beats and the best cover in punk this year! Withdraw into a cave and worship at the altar of QLOAQA LETAL! Ideal for: bondage dalliance, underground train station raves, lurking in dark corners plotting how to destroy the world.

STIGMATHE – *Suoni Puri Dalla Liberta* 7" EP + *Lo Sguardo Dei Morti* 7" EP (No Plan)
Italian punk has something so special about it, and STIGMATHE are one of my favourite Italian punks bands of old. Their two seminal EPs, both brimming with dark, haunting rage, reissued so you too can bless your ears with this blistering hardcore hurricane! Racketing beats beneath rusty-razor-sharp guitars, petrifying solos and nightmarish screams. Can I just die while Side A of *Lo Sguardo Dei Morti* is playing? Thanks to Adam for reissuing these and for gifting me a copy of each—much cherished! Ideal for: playing with sharp objects, anguished disorientation, howling at the moon, exhausted and sleepless in the darkness before dawn.

STRESS – *Sound of Insecurity* LP (B-Other Side)
I could write a whole column just about this record, and there could still be more left to write. A statement record that gathers the disillusionment and disappointment felt by '80s Greek punks, that feeling of political deception and societal asphyxiation. A testament to the ailing urban psyche of a deceived generation. Ideal for: burning ballot boxes, outdoor punk shows-turned-riots, making out in a dumpster.

WILD YOUTH – "Wot 'Bout Me/Anti You" 7" (Retrobution)
A lot of early punk scenes glorified western punk, but not WILD YOUTH! A truly punk record if ever there was one, with gloriously rough riffs and snarling vocals! "I don't wanna talk about Johnny Rotten, I don't wanna talk about Sid Vicious. I don't wanna talk about Joe Strummer, I just wanna talk about, about me! Wot 'bout me?" An essential record every punk should own! Ideal for: bleaching your hair, pogoing in the pit, party crashing bougie galleries.

V/A – *Bart Bay Area Retrograde Vol. 2* LP (Dark Entries)
What a collection—and there's a *BART Vol. 1* too! A knowingly curated selection that takes you back to a very different San Francisco, circa 1978-1983. A journey through neon-lit underground hallways where Moogs and Rolands rule, creative experimentation and exploration abound, and punks and weirdos intersect with artists and performers. Minimal electro, synth punk, new wave, early industrial, post-disco dance and much more—a truly fabulous View-Master-like trip back in time. Ideal for: riding BART (though I would have thought that was rather obvious), minimal (re)decoration projects, dance floor flirting, graphic design experiments.

Bands that rocked it in 2014:
S.H.I.T., PIG DNA, LOWEST FORM, PELUQUERIA CANINA, CADAVER EM TRANSE, LAS VENAS, BLOTTER, UGLY PARTS, SUNSHINE WARD, AUSCENCIA… It was a good year for: berets, dubious fascist symbol use, saxophones, synths, the word "catholic" and "flesh," one-sided 12"s, 12"s as opposed to 33rpm full-length albums, nakedness on stage, leather gloves. I'm forgetting a bunch of bands and trends, oh well. Time to look to the future, no more dwelling on the past.

ENDNOTES:
1) Yes, we are still looking for a content coord to replace me! Do you have what it takes? Get in touch for an app!
2) Welcome Eli and thank you Grace for holding down the fort over the holidays!
3) Next month, the Greek elections, my Athens trip shenanigans and more.
4) Lotsa cool *MRR* stuff on the way! Stay tuned!

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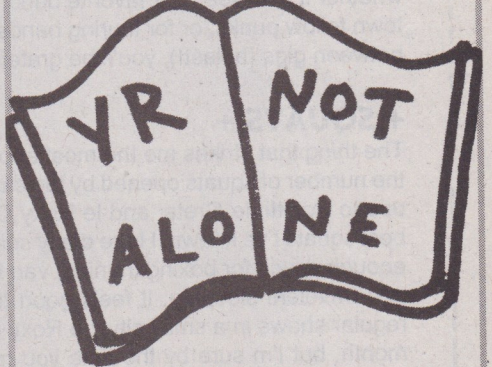

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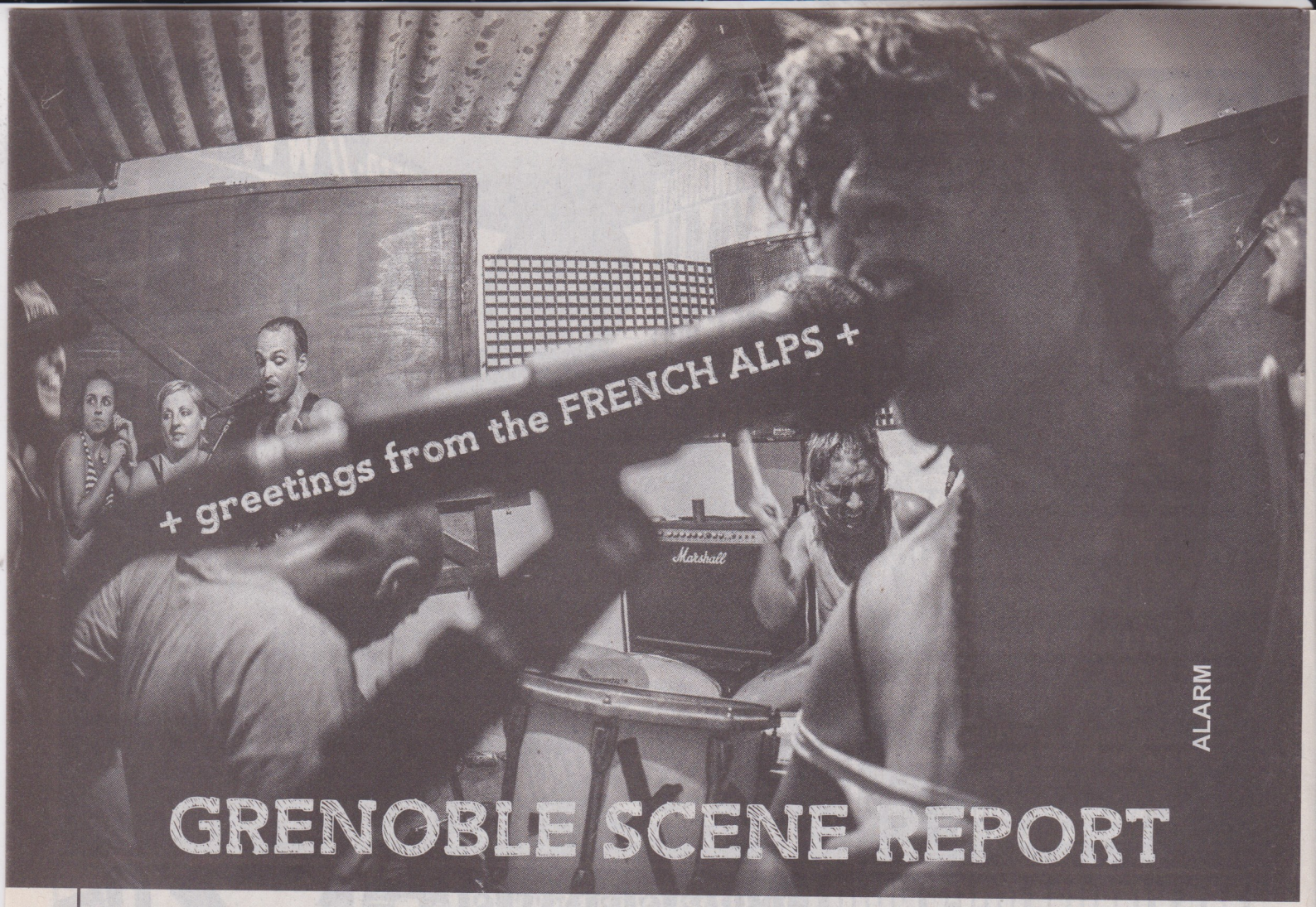


GRENOBLE SCENE REPORT

When Lydia asked me to write a Grenoble scene report five months ago, I was down for it. We don't get too much attention over here. Writing this report was not an easy task though—each sentence takes ages to write. This is my first time writing for a zine! Next time, I hope I will be faster. I've only been part of this scene for five years, but I haven't missed out on a lot of shows and I'm aware of what's going on in this city these days. I've tried to be the most accurate about what's happening in the French capital of the Alps, so here is what you should know about punk in Grenoble. Introduction and scene report by Josselin. Photos courtesy of Grenoble punks.

+ LOCATION +

Grenoble forms a triangle with neighboring cities Lyon and Saint-Étienne, which makes the trip to either one pretty easy—whether it is to see your favorite band, to socialize with out-of-town fellow punks, or for touring bands to only drive two hours between gigs (at last!), you'll be grateful.

+ SQUATS +

The thing that strikes me the most about the past five years is the number of squats opened by the same group of people (big ups to Polotti, le Greta, and le Roxy Cooper!). These are the best squats I've known. Huge crazy spaces for shows, but also enough space for boxing training, van fixing, bands practicing, and travelers sleeping. It feels good to have folks putting on regular shows in a small city. Le Roxy Cooper got evicted last month, but I'm sure by the time you read this, another squat will be open. I'm telling you, these guys are restless! Indeed, La Doudoune opened a couple of weeks ago. Shows will be imminent!

Even though the Green Party was elected this year to run the city, it hasn't changed much for the squats. The squats keep getting evicted and they stay empty for years after eviction. When is town hall going to figure out that this scene is alive, that it will always need a venue and a practice space, and that they are fighting against a pretty resourceful team?

+ BANDS +

I'll start with CHICKEN'S CALL. They've been playing together since 1998, which makes them the oldest punk band in town, a three-piece playing melodic anarcho-punk with catchy melodies and political lyrics sung in French. I personally like when they inject instrumental parts into their songs and make the crowd dance. They've put out two LPs and a bunch of other records (a split 7" with POWER IS POISON from Holland among them). They've toured Europe many times, South America a few times, and went to Japan last year and Australia/New Zealand the year before. They may have a silly name, but they play tight music. It's pretty exciting to see them live. (lustucrust.org, chickens.call@free.fr)

Two members of CHICKEN'S CALL, along with bandmates Jomar and Coralie, play in ALARM. They are a melodic punk rock band influenced by HOLE and the WIPERS. They put out their first 7" last year and are about to record a second. They toured in Brazil last January (with the help of their good friends

from the São Paulo-based label No Gods No Masters) and from what I heard, they had a blast. (alarmcoldpunk@yahoo.fr)
ZE REVENGERS wears eye masks and plays punk songs with cello and violin. They definitely remind me of the RAINCOATS with more weird chaotic parts. They released a 10" a couple of years ago.

At least two bands here play surf music from the mountains (born on the wrong side of the country, ah!). One is called LES PROFS DE SKIDS. They have a very dark apocalyptic vibe. They used to make the crowd go wild, but their new tunes are slower and more hypnotic. I am their new bass player. They released a split LP with SEASICKSIX from Toulouse a couple of years ago. The LP is gone but write to them to try and get a tape! (lesprofsdeskids@lustucrust.org)

BOJIE MOI ORKESTRA is the other surf band (actually a solo project). He's been performing his weird solo act for a few years now, wearing a Fantômas mask and , oddly, singing in Russian. Some people don't get it, but man, don't take it too seriously! For *South Park* fans, it can be hilarious. (taenia-solium.net/bmo)

PLAINE CRASSE is the most hardcore band we have here. These guys are angry. They sound more like anarcho-punk to me, with uncommon song structures, accentuated vocals, and a noisy bass. They have a 12" out. The singer Nicolas is a longtime punk and he runs the label Les Nains Aussi. (lustucrust.org/plainecrasse_discographie, lustucrust.org/LesNainsAussi/index.htm)

MR. MARTIN, who used to be in PLAINE CRASSE, plays his blues-folk tunes with a drummer now. I haven't seen them live yet, but they will be recording a demo next month. (martin.mogenet@no-log.org)

FLORENCE MEKOUYENSKY also plays solo. She describes herself as an "acid French singer." I would say she is a feminist singer who likes to get wasted with her punk boyfriends late at night. (flo.mekouy@poivron.org)

TAULARD is a cheap synth-punk band. So far, we've released a demo tape, a 7", and an LP called *Les Abords Du Lycée*. Lyrics are mostly about personal issues (older brother's suicide, dying to get over with high school and get the hell out of the country, suffocation, feeling stuck and insecure). It feels good to shout this shit out loud. (taulard.bandcamp.com)

LA CREVE is a mellow punk rock band with songs about personal matters. For instance, moving out way too often makes you accumulate so much shit, that it's hard to sort out. One song questions the purposes of travelling and touring. It's pretty inspiring. First I thought "What's wrong with travelling?", then I saw her point. They've just released a demo tape, which I like.

MANNEQUIN is an emo mathrock duo. They are about to release a demo tape.

GETHEN formed in 2009. They remind me of LAS OTRAS, whom they have shared a bill with a couple of times. They are anarcha-feminists and their lyrics are about what they go through as women and lesbians in this society, gaining strength to resist and fight back. Take back the night! They have put out a demo, as well as a split 7" with PETRASCHELM (RIP). They toured Germany and Spain with SLUX from Göttingen.

Last year, MIND FUCK released one of the best records out of here, heavy and slow hardcore for depressed minds. The band stopped playing for a while, then broke up, but I heard they found a new drummer. More agony in perspective. To get a copy of their 10", contact them at acidefolik@herbesfolles.org.

LES TROIS HUIT is the new local anti-fascist Oi! band. They support the local football team and sing shit like "*Unis dans la boisson*" (united in booze), which sounds kind of stupid, but works well for them. I saw them live twice and it was fun and exciting to see their crowd gather around to sing along with the chorus. They are about to release a demo. If you like Warrior Kids with "ACAB!" shouted between songs, check them out!

Most of these bands share the same practice space. Two years ago, they decided it was high time to put out a compilation of DIY punk bands from Grenoble. It's called *Sous-sols*. Not enough tapes were pressed, but to get a CD version of the compilation write to chickens.call@free.fr

+ ZINES +

Bunches of zines are put out around here. *Maximum Cuvette* is a collective zine mainly about punk; it is the local *MRR*. Each issue comes with a nice screen-printed cover. *Impressions* and *Siamois* are more centered on social changes within the city: squats being evicted and being replaced with new ugly expensive condos, graffiti being covered up with new friendly city-sponsored murals. Gentrification happens in small cities too.

+ PLACES +

Le Local Autogéré is the local punk infoshop. It's been there for nine years, mainly with the same crew of people running the place. I'll let my friend David talk about them: "The idea was to have a stable place to be able to organize things in the long term. Everything is volunteer-run and non-profit. We show movies, organize workshops, and have debates. There are also language courses, acoustic shows, exhibitions, and punk rock DJ nights. The place is open for groups who want to have meetings or need the space for their own projects. We have a big punk distro there, with many records from three different distros and labels, including Les Nains Aussi. There is a library and many zines to buy/read. We are open three times a week, if people want to come and say hi!" (local_autogere@no-log.org, lustucrust.org, 7 rue Pierre Dupont)

La BAF is a volunteer-run social center. Last year, a guy from the Bay Area visited and said it felt like home. Happenings at La BAF include punk shows every other week, and a screen-printing workshop and an infoshop open every Saturday afternoon with all kinds of pamphlets. There is a feminist library open every Monday for women-lesbian-trans*-identified people only and open the first Monday of the month for everyone. There are also different workshops (French teaching, self-defense, yoga). It is basically open to anyone to bring any new ideas. (labaf.org, labaf@gresill.org, 2 chemin des Alpins)

Le 102 is a long running venue. It used to be a squat, but now has some kind of agreement with the town hall. They celebrated their thirtieth year of existence last year. There aren't as many punk shows as we wish there would be, as they are more focused on avant-garde and experimental music, but maybe once every other month you get to see one. Also happening at le 102 is the Great Fighters' boxing practice—nothing better to cure your hangover with on a Sunday afternoon. (le102.net, contact@le102.net, 102 rue d'Alembert)

Le 103 is a non-profit screen-printing workshop located one floor above Le 102. Tons of posters, record and zine covers have been printed there in the past years. Every once in awhile, Nico and Mélo organize screen-printing workshops where you can learn the techniques to print your own stuff.

Le Saint-Bruno is a bar located at Place Saint-Bruno, run by some friends. It's where most punks hang out. After they bought it from the lady who had owned the place for 30 years, they didn't change anything inside so the old customers could still come and feel at home. The food is vegetarian now though and

it has made some new customers turn up for lunch and some old customers pissed off. Still, it remains very mixed. Coffee is strong and cheap and the food is good. Last June, we connected a generator to the bar and seven punk bands played in front of it. That was sick! Best *fête de la musique* ever.

+ COLLECTIVES +

Lustucrust.org is a collective website for Grenoble city punks, with information about distros (Les Nains Aussi), infoshops, and bands (including CHICKEN'S CALL, ALARM, PLAINE CRASSE, and LES PROFS DE SKIDS).

Dalidark is a women-lesbian-trans* only collective that supports, promotes and puts on women-lesbians-trans* only events. Since 2010, they have organized shows, screenings, debates, vegan restaurants, cabarets, puppetry performances, and a tattoo convention. (dalidark@gresille.org)

As you may have noticed, the feminist punk scene is huge here. Whether it is through bands, collectives or squats, a lot has been done to make women, lesbians, and trans* people feel stronger. My friends say it's easier to be a woman here than in most cities in France. From my point of view, it is particularly visible at shows when you see someone starting to give shit to a woman and there are like five of her friends who burst out of the crowd to back her up. It's been like this for years. If you travel around France, sometimes you hear people saying the feminist cause in Grenoble is too extreme and it's taken too seriously. It's bullshit. I feel like Grenoble has made a safe scene for itself and now everyone can go to shows or the weekly boxing training without fear of having to deal with people making trouble.

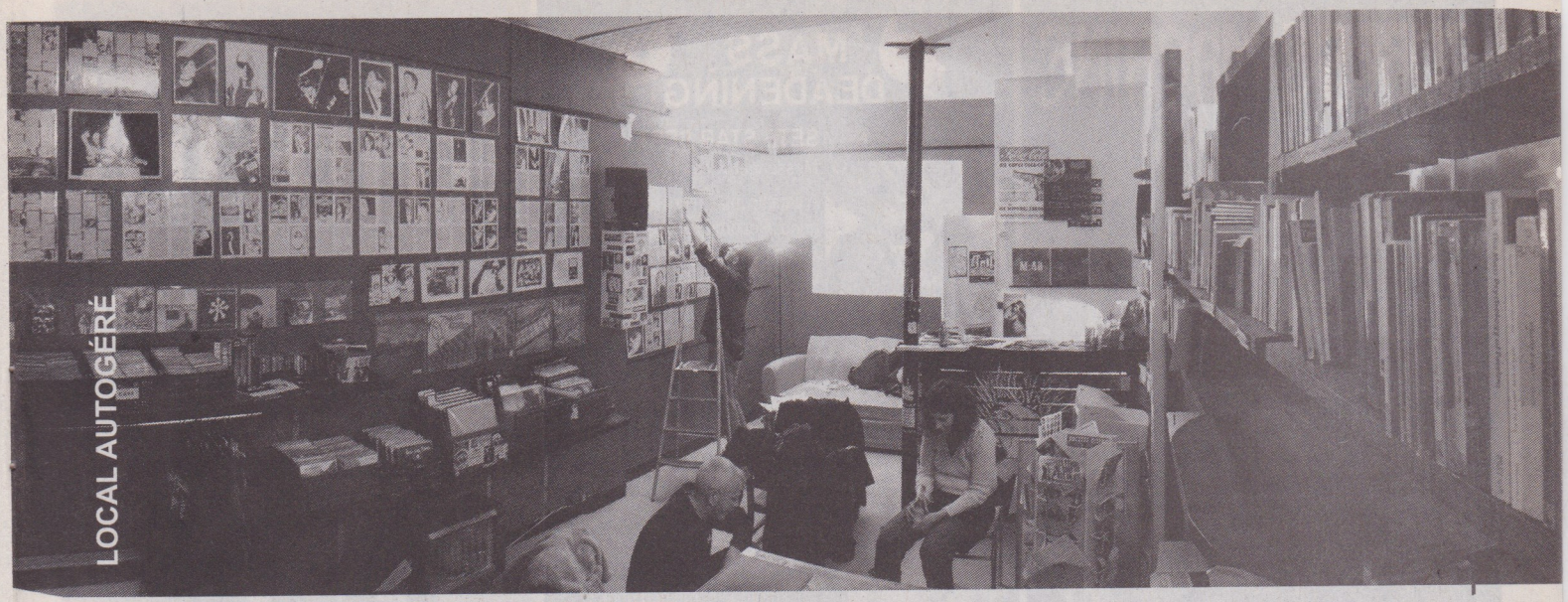
Being a small city, the scenes all get mixed here. Everyone hangs out in the same spots. Rap culture is as big as punk in the squat scene, hip-hop kids go to punk shows and some punks make rap music. Besides sharing the same hangout spots, what brings all these scenes together is politics. We fight for the same causes and people get really involved around here. Demonstrations and actions against things such as the nanotech rise in Grenoble are common. The tech industry attracts tons of wealthy engineers, which is changing the city. Among the negative consequences: the Turin-Lyon high-speed railway construction (No TAV movement) that goes through the Susa Valley would literally destroy it; the construction of a tourist village called Center Parcs des Chambarans out there in the country and the clearing of tons of trees that such a project implies; and more recently police brutality after a comrade was killed by a grenade at la Zad du Testet in southwestern France. Most of these issues have been documented in small books edited by Le monde à l'envers at Le 103. (lemondealenvers.lautre.net)

CHICKEN'S CALL

+ FOOD +

I should have started with this. Food here is almost as important as the music when you go to a show. You'll always find vegan food for both bands and audience. Music starts around 9 pm, but most people turn up earlier and treat themselves to tasty vegan food.

Las Vegan is a vegan cooking collective, which has mastered incredible vegan food. All of the members play in one of the bands mentioned above. They cook delicious meals before the shows. Among my favorites are homemade French fries,



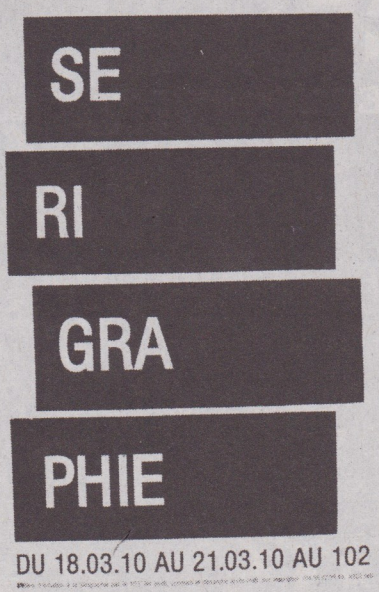
carbonate flamande (seitan and gingerbread cooked in beer), chili sin carne, or couscous. They were planning to open a restaurant in town, which thrilled everyone.

+ PRIX LIBRE +

Shows don't have a fixed door price; admission is donation-based. This applies not only to shows, but also food, books and records. It's quite a big deal over here. Taenia Solium is a record label with a no fixed-price policy. It's run by a bunch of people who print the covers and inserts themselves at Le 103 and sometimes also record the bands themselves, which makes the process of putting out a record pretty cheap. Here in France, everyone (except those in the DIY music scene) takes for granted that a record costs 15 Euros. It's nonsense. Where does the money go? Punks here in Grenoble make a point of making things the cheapest they can, so everyone can have access to them. It makes the people who've been buying overpriced records their whole life rethink the whole thing. Taenia Solium puts out local bands' records, but also free compilations and free zines. (taenia-solium.net)

+ NATURE +

Mountains surround Grenoble. I like the mountains—my favorite one is called Moucherotte, which I can see from my window. Don't get me wrong, it doesn't make me an outdoor sports jock, but it sure feels good from time to time to get the fuck out of the city and go hike one of the mountains or relax by the water. Two spots are highly recommended and you are most likely gonna go there if you come to Grenoble in the summer and hang out with the punks! The first one is called Lac de La Taillat; it's a 20-minute bike ride from the city, just long enough to make you all sweaty and ready to jump in the water. However, I think the water gets too hot in the summer, which is why I'd rather go to Les cuves de Sassenage. It has nice waterfalls, the best swimming holes, and the most refreshing water that runs down from the mountains above. For those who don't fear cold water, it's a hell of a fun time. Also, on your way back to the city, make sure to stop at La Neige, the best ice cream shop in town. (111 avenue Aristide Briand, Fontaine)



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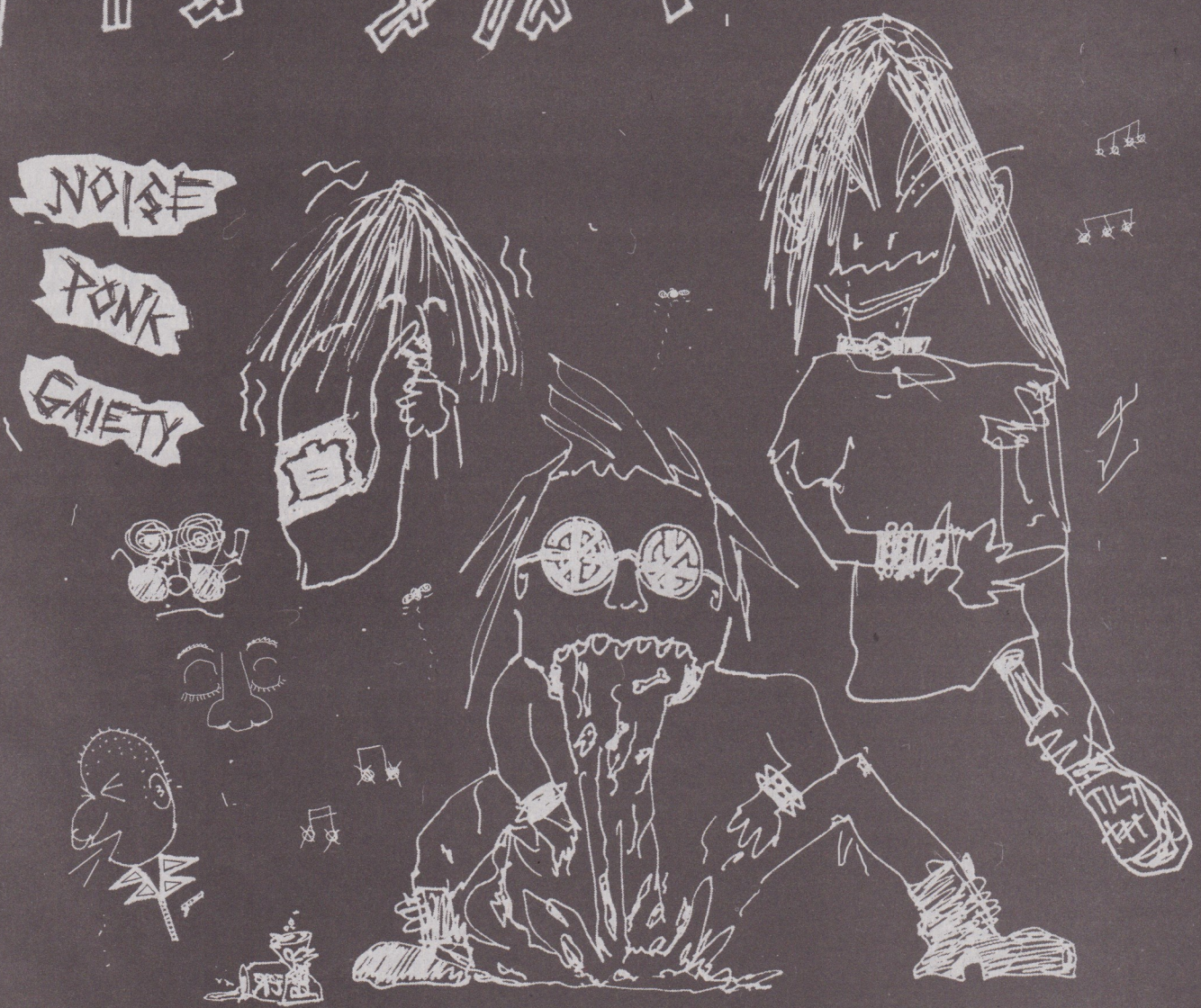
PIG DNA

SZ = Shit Zoo (Guitar)
C = Chelsea (Drums)
THC = Tilted H.C. (Bass)
LF = Leatherfist (Vocals)



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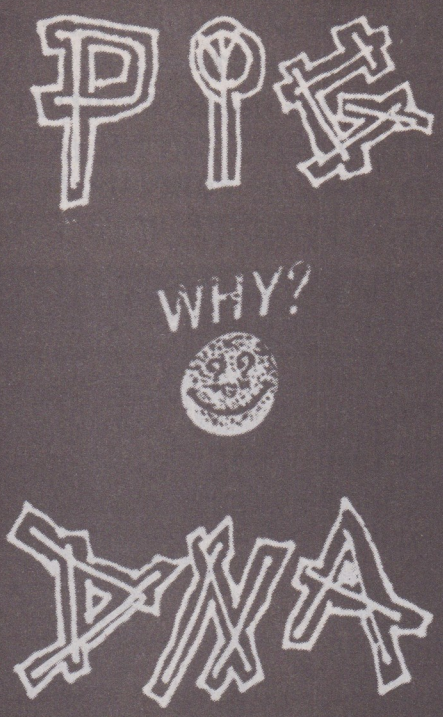

MRR: Why don't you start by telling me how you got started as a band?
THC: Three of us lived together in Philly.
SZ: We were already planning on moving to California, but we started playing music together and we thought it'd be fun to play some shows before we went out west together. We played two shows just as a three-piece, where we improvised vocals.

MRR: What made you move out to California together? Was it a decision that specifically had to do with the band?
THC: Well, Shit Zoo and Chelsea were planning on moving out to California by driving in their Volvo. They had a little bit of spare room and jokingly asked me if I wanted to go along. I was like, "Yeah OK!" I think they were probably like, "Oh fuck… what have we done?"

MRR: Did you know you were going to continue with Pig DNA after moving to the Bay?
C: Yeah, the only things Tilted brought with him from Philly were his bass head and a battered bag of clothes.

MRR: So how did you meet Leatherfist?
C: Leatherfist and I met at community college, she wore punk and metal shirts to class and then I'd see her at shows.

MRR: So did you just go up to her and say let's be friends? Or were you like, I'm in this band you should be our singer?
LF: One night we were all at the same show at the Swamp [a punk house in Oakland], and Chelsea saw me there and came up to me and introduced herself, and introduced me to the boys. Later on she asked me if I'd be interested in doing vocals, and told me a bit about what their sound was like, describing it as being in a Japanese hardcore style.
THC: And Leatherfist was like, "Oh you like that Japanese shit, huh?"
LF: Eventually I went to their practice space with them, and I tried it out. I made some noises, and they liked it. They accepted me. Pig DNA is my first band. It is always something I've wanted to do, having been in the punk scene in the Bay Area for a long while. But I've always been a shy, reserved kind of person.

MRR: For me, that first tape is really cool and insane and noisy, but every subsequent release is more angry and focused. So I am curious about whether that was a function of playing together more, or whether that was from Leatherfist joining the band, since her vocals are so minimal and intense. They're almost like another percussive instrument.
SZ: Well, on that first tape the vocals are basically just an afterthought. We knew that there should be *some* vocals, so Tilted and I both just did some stuff. We figured out pretty quickly that we wanted to get somebody else to do vocals. Meeting Leatherfist changed everything and kind of reset the band. The sound evolved from there.
LF: I would say that songs got shorter and faster when I joined. I have the tendency to write lyrics that are short and to the point. There's no pussyfooting. I think a lot of my songs are rooted in anger and from wanting to write about things with which I'm dissatisfied. Sometimes the lyrics are collaborative, and someone else in the band will give me a phrase or a line, and I'll go from that and write the rest of the song.

MRR: It seems to me that, from Discharge on, some bands have really succinct and to-the-point lyrics. I was wondering if your minimal lyrics are a function of the way the music is set up, an homage to the style, or just how you naturally write?
LF: Sometimes I do write more long form lyrics. But a lot of times after I hear the music for a new song, and I'm trying to figure out where the lyrics fit in, I wind up cutting a lot of the words that I've written. It usually just sounds better that way. I don't really think about the history of hardcore songwriting when I'm writing lyrics; I just do what feels natural.

MRR: But then there is the noise track on the *DOM* cassette "Mussolini Things," which is accompanied by words that are clearly not Leatherfist's literary or lyrical contribution. Can you tell me a little about what that's about?
LF: Ultimately, "Mussolini Things" has no lyrics.

MRR: Right, but there is some writing on the lyric sheet underneath the lyrics to the rest of your songs under the title "Mussolini Things." And what's written is this long form series of sentences, a really strange and interesting juxtaposition with your lyrics…
SZ: That's spliced together quotes from different stages in Mussolini's political thought. There's the pre-war socialist internationalism and the post-war fascism kind of juxtaposed, but also really just interwoven, I think it's remarkably fluid really. Personally I'm very interested in how fascist movements emerged in response to the perceived failings of liberal democracy, like how Mussolini describes liberalism as piling up Gordian knots. I just think that's a really incisive way to understand the World Wars and the 20th century in general...
C: …As you can see Shit Zoo is kind of a wingnut.
SZ: Hey, it's not just me.

MRR: That's right, you sometimes have a mysterious fifth member. Tell us about him, what does he do in the band?
SZ: He's been on two of our recordings so far; he does more noise.
C: For Pig DNA purposes he goes by DJ Kawakamunist, though some people out there know him as Lee Planter.
LF: He smashed some bones for us.
SZ: He is a left-wing extremist by nature. DM Kawakamunist will continue to be an integral part of Pig DNA in the future as we know it.

MRR: Are you, as a band, interested in noise bands outside of noise punk?
SZ: Yes.
LF: Slightly. Not really.
SZ: Well, where I grew up there was a fairly large noise scene. There was a noise venue where I saw Prurient and Wolf Eyes and stuff like that. Air Conditioning was a local group. I ended

up going to a lot of noise shows back then. Even though I didn't like all of it at the time, that scene definitely influenced me a lot. I would say I still like listening to industrial and power electronics, harsh noise stuff, even though I don't go to those shows too often. I didn't really get into "noise punk" until I was 19 or 20, and what initially appealed to me about it was what already appealed to me about noise.

MRR: There's a rumor floating around that Pig DNA is an art band. Are you an art band?
LF: Fuck no.
SZ: Definitely no.
LF: Everything we do is a genuine expression of what we like and who we are. For me, an art band is something that is sort of contrived, or something created to generate some sort of response. For us, everything that we create is simply what we enjoy and want to put into our music and imagery.

MRR: So are you a punk band?
C: Yeah.
SZ: The art band thing is strange. We do our own art but I think that comes more out of not knowing how to do fancy art. We doodle and make collage shit.
LF: We like making our own art, because that's what it's all about. We're a DIY band.
SZ: In an age when a lot of bands outsource their art, I think it's fun to try to do everything ourselves. There's no right way to do it, of course, but…
LF: We're neutral about what everyone else does, but I think it would be interesting and cool if all bands did their own art just to see what would come of that process.

MRR: Are you a political band?
LF: I think our politics are within us, and that they're just naturally going to come out when we make music. We don't have the intention of being like, "This is our message. We want you to do this."

MRR: Well, going back to the question about the noise scene, I tend to think of the noise world as being an aggressively apolitical world, whereas that's not the case with punk, which has a history of political engagement. So would you say that politics or ethics is something that separates you from being a noise band? *Are* you a noise band?
SZ: We're not a noise band because we mostly write actual songs with relatively clear structures, although noise is an important component of our sound. But as a band, our individual politics are coming a similar place, at least relatively.

MRR: Why did you put out so many tapes before you put out any records? Are they all demos, or do you think of them as proper releases?
SZ: I'd say the first two tapes are demos in the true sense, where we just wanted to record whatever we could, when we could.
LF: One is a demo with me on vocals; one is a demo before I joined. After that, one is a live tape that we recorded for a radio show in Portland.
SZ: And the most recent tape [*DOM*] is the other songs from the EP recording. But as to why we do so many tapes, it's just because we all like tapes a lot.
C: Tapes are easiest to do ourselves, and they're cheaper.
SZ: With the cassette releases, we did every aspect of the release that we could by ourselves, just at home and at the copy shop.
C: We all put work into doing as much as we can for ourselves.

I THINK OUR POLITICS ARE WITHIN US, AND THAT THEY'RE JUST NATURALLY GOING TO COME OUT WHEN WE MAKE MUSIC.

MRR: How do you balance being a kind of "genre band" in a genre that has clear conventions—and those conventions can be important, because they give what you're doing form—but at the same time look for ways to not be redundant or boring? Unlike some bands, you're not using a blueprint, with the exact same fonts and lyrical inputs and screaming-baby-in-war art, even though you borrow from aesthetic elements of the genre.

THC: We spend a lot of time going through different versions of our art, until we all get what we want out of it. It's very communal, and all of us contribute. We want it to look a certain way, so we sometimes use certain recognizable elements At the same time we try to give it our own twist. When something looks too generic, we tear it up and use the elements to make something new.

LF: We have a respect and a regard for bands that came before us, and we're inspired by them. But we're not confined to what they've already accomplished. We can be inspired while still trying to chart our own path, and be true to ourselves.

I THINK THAT IN A LOT OF MODERN MUSIC THE IDEA OF RITUAL IS MISSING. PERFORMING IS DIFFERENT THAN JUST GOING OUT THERE AND EXISTING.

MRR: Most other crusty or noise punk bands have no sense of humor, although they can come across as unintentionally humorous. You guys, to me, are the opposite—you have a sense of humor, particularly in your art—but you're not at all wacky. You're really serious about what you're doing. For instance I find Leatherfist extremely intimidating and intense live, even scary. So how do you make that work?

THC: I don't think we really understand how we find that balance. I mean, the balance is definitely there, but I'm not totally sure how we achieve it. There are so many things that we find funny about our art, but still it's really serious to us.

MRR: On the EP and the *DOM* tape, the recording is remarkably similar to what you sound like live. This seems like a major accomplishment, given how particular you are as a band about the sound that you're trying to achieve. Is it difficult to get your live sound to translate in the recording studio? Or is it the inverse—do you have trouble replicating your studio sound live?

LF: Getting recordings to sound right has been a constant struggle for us, and a learning process. The studio is a whole different animal for us than the live stage. We're still working on it, but I think we're getting closer. Some of us feel that the live tape is actually the recording that is truest to our sound.

SZ: We are not a particularly gear-literate band, so it's still a learning process just to get our live sound right. Once we leave our practice space, the second we borrow something or play in a bigger space, we're fucked as far as getting our sound the way we want it. It's hit or miss and usually we just compensate by being as loud and noisy as possible. Or at least I do.

MRR: I want to go back to something you said earlier. Leatherfist, you mentioned that you reject the art band title because everything you do is a genuine expression of who you are. But someone could turn around and say, well you have personas, and fake names, and you dress a certain way on stage. It's not as though you just roll out of bed and perform. So there is still an intentional way that you present yourselves that seems aestheticized. If it's not an "act" per se, what is it? Is it like how Superman is really Superman, but he has to dress like Clark Kent to be a regular person to pass in regular society? Is it that your Pig DNA personas are your real selves, but you can't walk around carrying a knife in regular life telling people your names are Shit Zoo and Leatherfist?

LF: I would say that my stage persona is an exaggerated version of what I try to be in my everyday life. I like the idea of being strong and tough, which comes out more naturally when I perform. I like being scary. I like to look people directly in the eyes and make faces at them. I don't do it to be any way for anyone; I do it because I enjoy it. I think that in a lot of modern music the idea of ritual is missing. Just the mere act of putting on a glove is enough to make me feel that I'm in performance mode. You know, performing is different than just going out there and existing. And, a lot of what we do is for each other. It comes from our real relationships, it's not an act for other people to interpret.

SZ: These are our names. Punks forever have been making shit up, doesn't make it fake.

MRR: Any final words? Want to tell us about your upcoming plans?

THC: Hopefully tour with Spetsnaz on the moon.

LF: Smoke only blunt.

Pig DNA's Control You Fucker #3 *7" EP is out now on Nightrider Records. Purchase a copy at understanddischarge.storenvy.com.*

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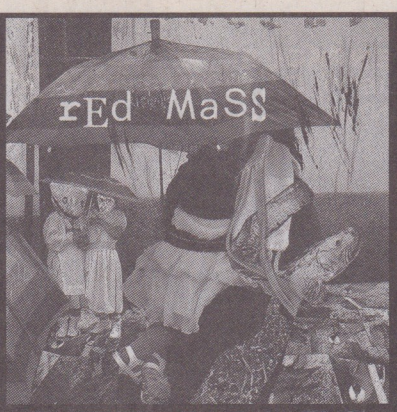

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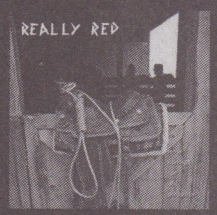

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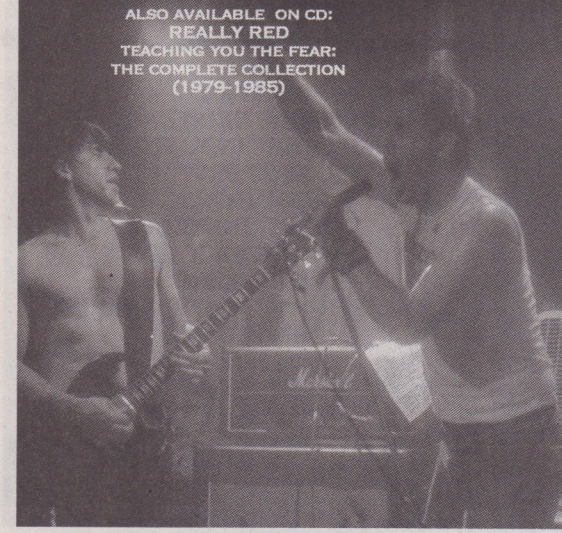

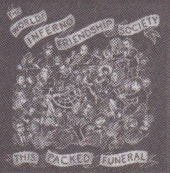

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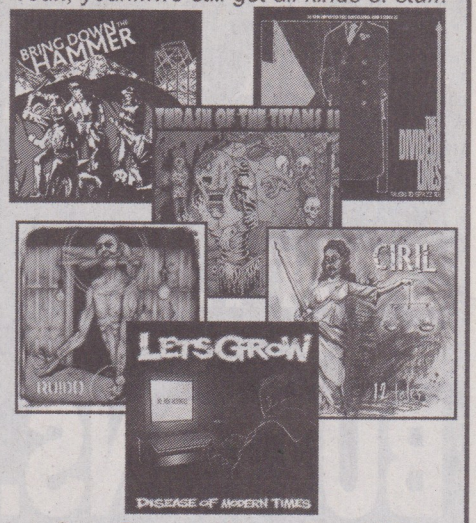
Yeah, yeah...we still got all kinds of stuff.



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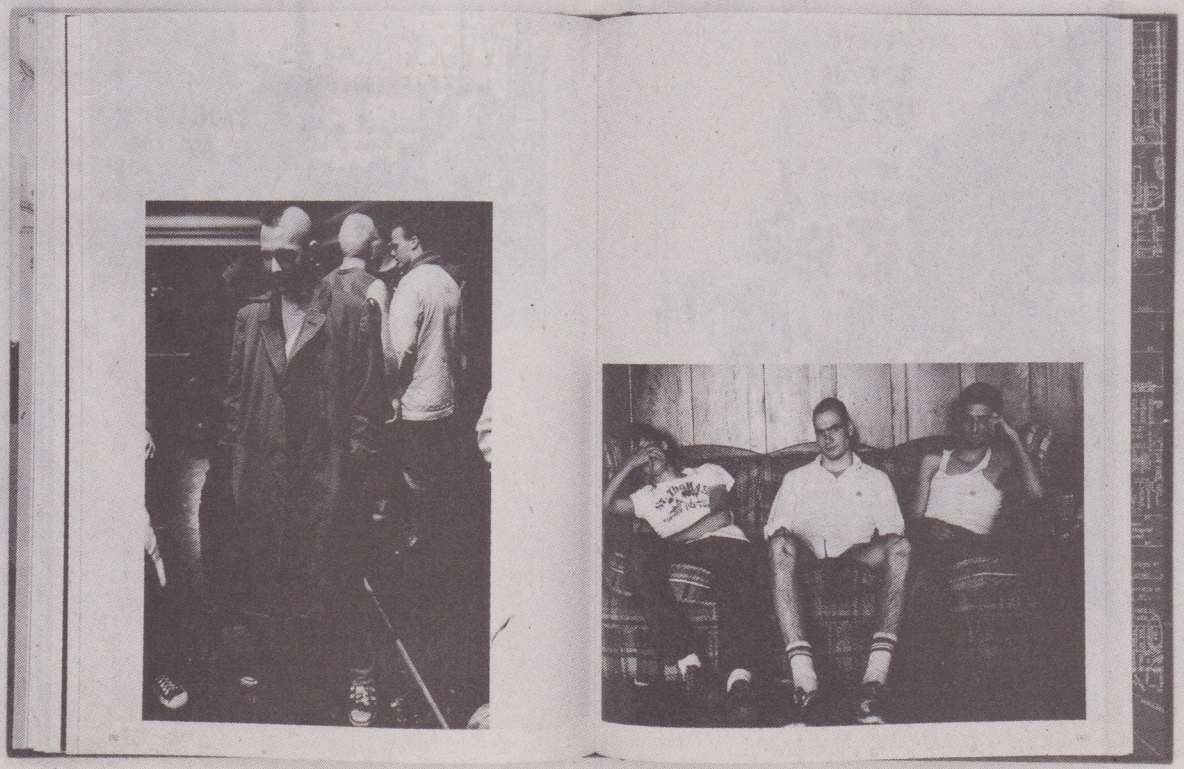
SPOT:
Skate Beach Punk

Spot is mostly recognized as the engineer who sculpted some of the US's seminal punk sounds through his work with SST Records. But, like most people that are or have been involved in punk, he is much more than that one thing. A few years back I was given a print of Darby Crash, sitting on stage and screaming into a microphone. I didn't know the image and when I examined it, I found his name written on the back. I was surprised, to say the least. My inner voice repeated, "Photography?" I hadn't heard of his work in the medium, and I was truly impressed.

Towards the end of this past year, news began to spread about a release of a Spot photobook. I had a feeling it was going to be good. After flipping through twenty or so sheets, I realized the weight of the work within these pages. This monograph was more than some photographs of punk—the scope of this work widened, imploring the viewer to take a deeper look into a culture that floated around beach cities, specifically Hermosa Beach, CA. Spot was there from 1969–1982 with camera in hand, catching the action. We are truly lucky that he did, both for the sake of further understanding him as an artist but also as a means of documenting a place and people that, unknowingly, shaped an important part of American culture.

Spot paid a visit to our foggy city while on a brief trip to promote his new book Sounds of Two Eyes Opening. *I caught him at Green Apple Books where he signed books and chatted with interested folks. I am thankful he took the time to answer a few questions for* MRR.

Interview and introduction by Martin Sorrondeguy. Photos courtesy of Spot and Sinecure Books.



MRR: Talk to me a little about how taking photos all began.

Okay, remember *LIFE* magazine? There was always *LIFE* magazine in the house and I loved looking at it. There were so many great photos and I was like, "I wanna do that." And then, when I saw the movie *Blow Up,* I was like, "Yeah, I gotta do that!" I got my first camera in '69, an old Pentax H1a, and just started shooting.

MRR: How old were you around then?

Oh, god, just outta high school. It got my parents off my back! [laughs] Because I didn't want to go to college. So I had to tough it out, because the whole motivation for going to college back then was to stay out of the draft. But, because I was actually learning a skill and people were actually paying me a little bit of money to take a picture here and there, my parents said, "Well, maybe he's actually learning something that'll make him money." That was in '69.

MRR: Did you get any formal training?

Nooo. Just from reading and making mistakes. [laughs] I just experimented. Film was cheap back then!

MRR: In the book it says that a lot of the stuff was put away for a long time. When you went back through, what did you feel was your favorite era?

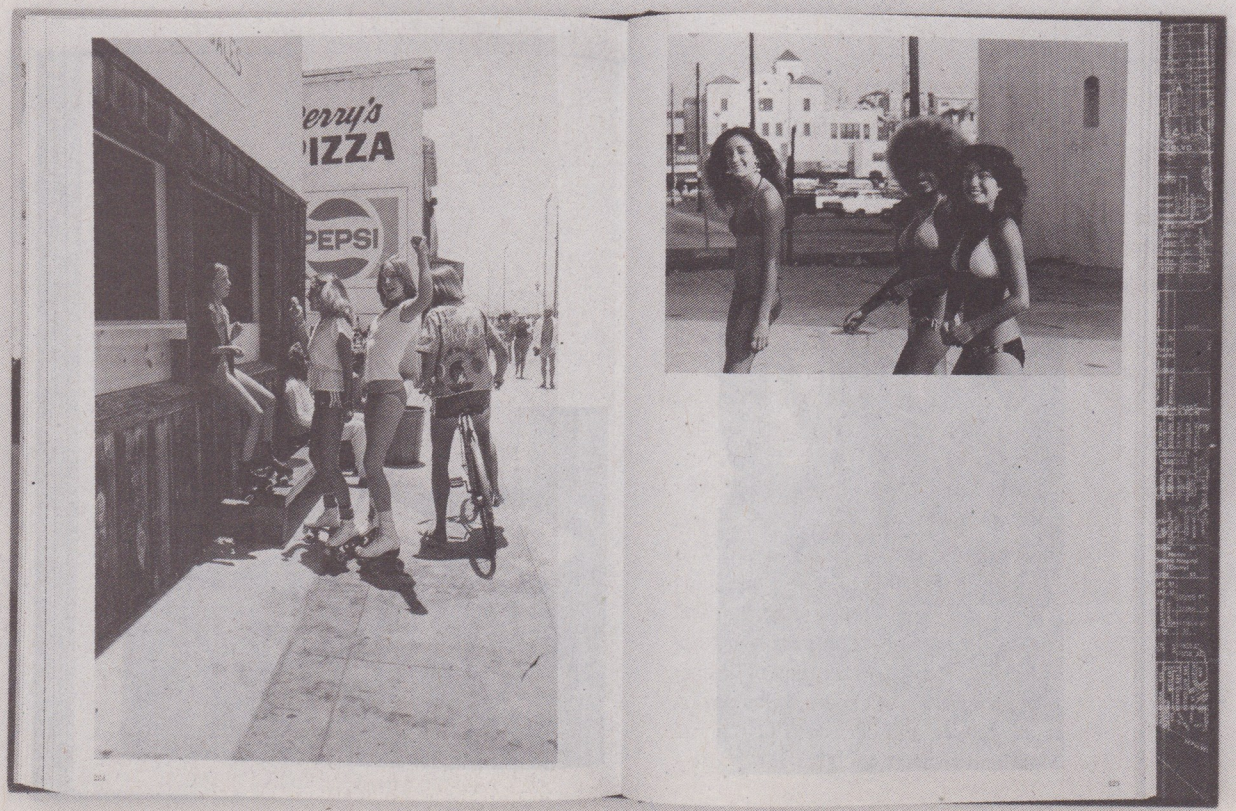
Well, there're three different eras in there, you know: the early [stuff] from '69 to '72. My camera got stolen in '72 so I had to stop for a few years. And then there's probably my favorite era, the middle period, when I started working for the *Easy Reader* writing music reviews—oh God, I wrote *music reviews*!—and some feature stuff. That's when I had the darkroom, and that's when I figured out all the film and developing techniques that worked for me. I started taking photos when I got a new camera, and the whole skating section was me walking by and seeing these guys open a skate shop. They were out behind the shop, on skates, with a circle saw cutting the roof off their Volkswagen to turn it into their skate mobile. And I'm like, "These guys are nuts! I gotta take pictures of this!" [laughs] So, you know, we're just jawing and then they said, "You skate?" and I'm like, "No." "You skate?" "Well, sure." So they went and got me a pair of skates and then I'm out there on skates taking pictures with them! I just kept taking pictures of people skating and bringing them down and putting them on the wall and just ended up skating...

MRR: There are some pretty intimate photos. I'm assuming you just became friends, you were part of that thing that was happening.

It was, yeah, I was part of that. I was there.

MRR: And they trusted you enough? Were there any people who were just like, "Fuck you, don't take my photo"?

Oh yeah, but not there. I tell you, early on in the late '60s/early '70s, I spent a lot of time hanging out with these hippies. And I got a camera and they all used to think I was a narc. So I started digging on that. I'd be there with my camera and I didn't want to smoke any pot. "This guy's a narc!" There were these guys in Hollywood who were making smoking pipes and I started working for them for a little bit but because I was bringing my camera they were like "*uhhh*" and they fired me. So, one day I'm walking past their place and their front door's like a Dutch door where the top would open and I thought I'd just say hi to them. I walked up and they're all in there, looking at something. I put the camera out, put it on the thing, and said, "Smile!" They all turned around: *click*! Got 'em. I developed the film and had this perfectly exposed shot of all their faces, so I made a print and said, "Hey! Thought I'd bring you guys this. Came out pretty good, didn't it?" And they're like, "*uhhh, yeah, uhhh*." [laughs] So that's kinda the only time...I never had problems with, well, I shouldn't say that, with cops.



MRR: There's a few in the book, talking to people or bothered by something...

Oh, you know the cops that were in the book? Those guys were cool. They didn't care, but I've had some run-ins. If somebody didn't want it they'd just run away. But I'd take a picture anyway.

MRR: There were a few photos at shows, where you see all the helmets of the cops that came in...

Oh yeah, Baces Hall! [laughs] I got billy clubbed that night!

MRR: You had your camera, there's fucking motion, you can tell it's like you didn't have time to sit there and get a really sharp image. What was going through your mind at that time? I mean, most people's instinct is "Let's get the fuck out of here" but you managed to snap a couple of shots.

I'll tell you what actually happened that night. The cops were out there for a while trying to shut down the show, and at one point I was elected to go out and talk to them and convince them that if we didn't let the headlining band (Black Flag) play, these kids were gonna get really mad. "You're gonna have your hands full, so I think you should at least let them play, let them play a few songs." And they were like, "Well, okay, but don't let anything happen." The rest is history. So maybe you can blame me, or blame the cops but no, I didn't take pictures then. I went out there and, as calmly and as rationally as I could, talked to these guys. Whew, that was scary!

MRR: Were there any photographers whose work really stuck out to you?

Pretty much all the *LIFE* photographers. One of my favorites actually was Gordon Parks. It was just that whole era of black and white journalistic photography that's just, you know, kinda timeless. This might be a little bit of a tangent, but the Apollo missions? Those guys weren't really photographers, but some of those photos are really iconic. Have you seen any of Alan Bean's work? Alan Bean was the fourth man on the moon and he was an artist. He came back and he started this series of paintings of the moon, of what he experienced, that are so fucking cool. They are really cool. You oughta look those up. But it just kills me that they had to leave those Hasselblads up there!

MRR: Totally! I never shot with a Hasselblad!

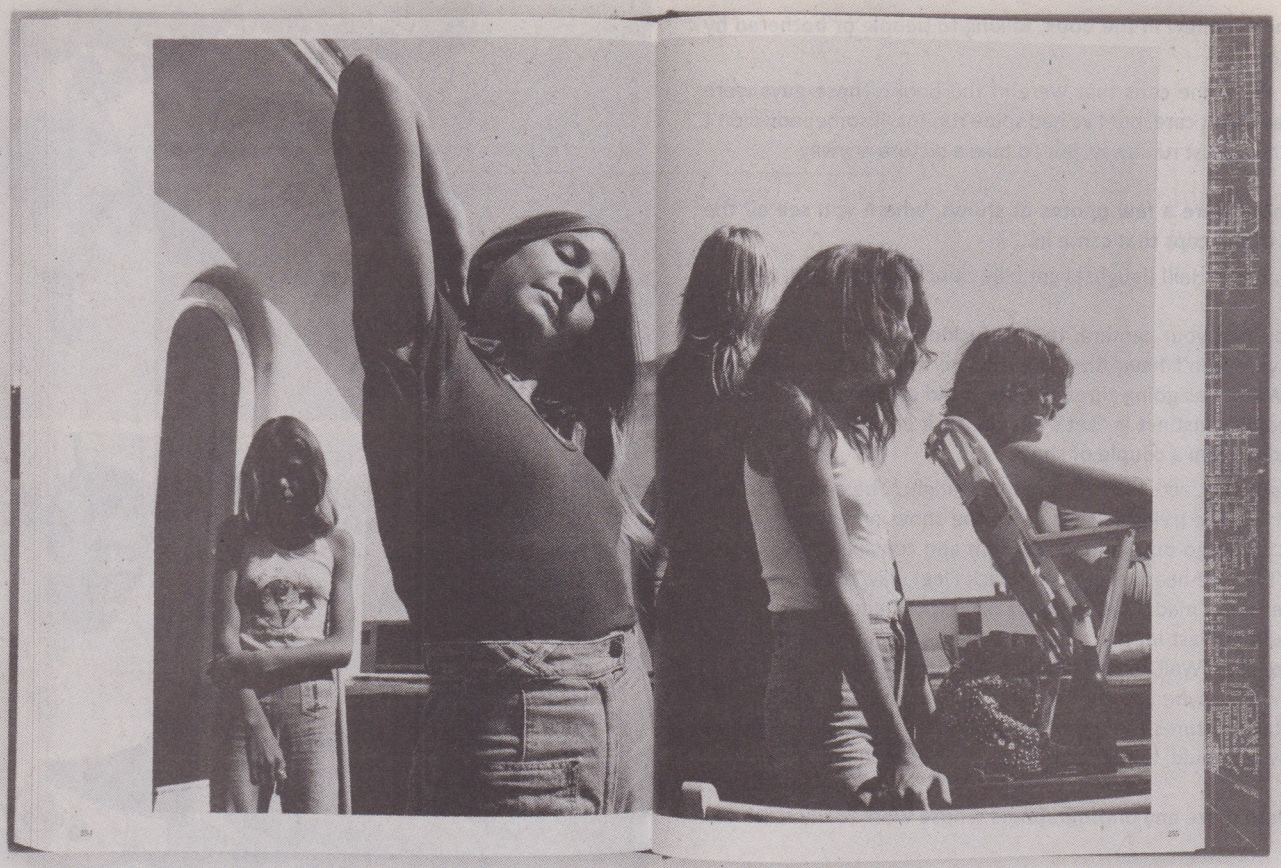
Me neither. Well, I know where there're some perfectly workable ones right now!

MRR: Now, you did mostly black and white but there is a small section in color. What happened there?

I just thought, well, try some color! [laughs] A lot of skate magazines, they were looking for color. Because I was doing black and white they didn't wanna do my photos, because, you know, it was all about color. I started trying to do a little color and I got a few things in some of those magazines but never much. I really liked black and white anyway.

MRR: Now, so you were on the beach, all this is happening, how did you fall into the whole punk thing?

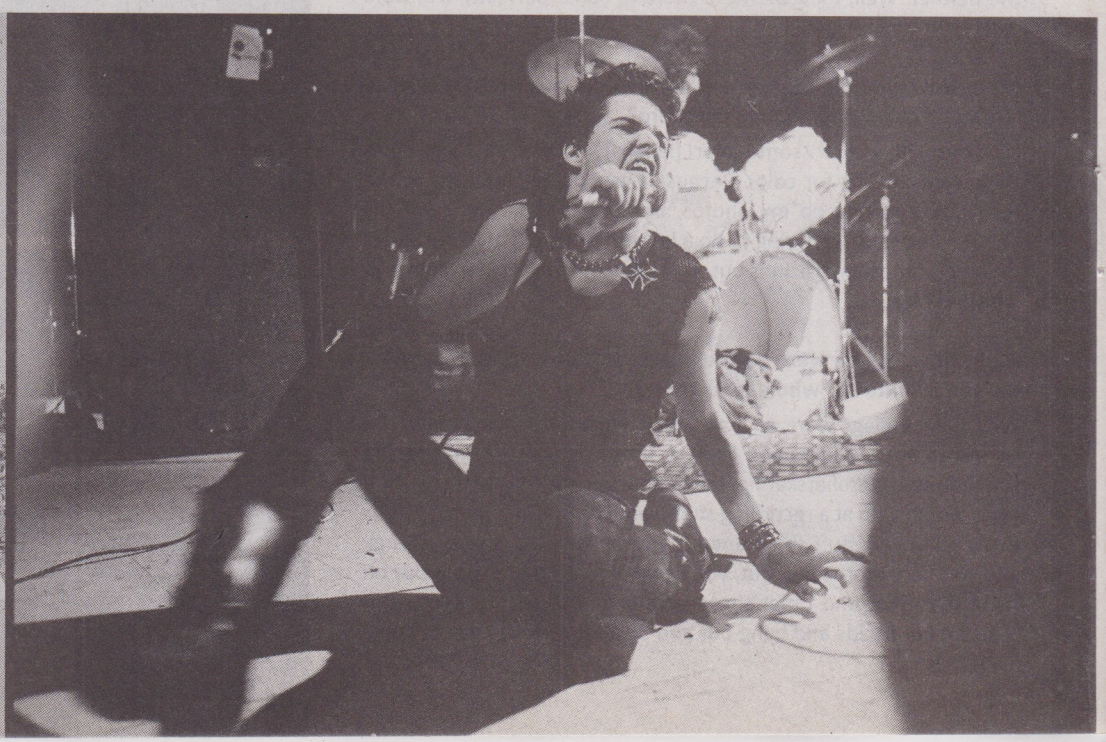
Well, [Black Flag] were all part of that whole beach scene. The thing you gotta understand is all of these things were happening simultaneously. Rollerskating, the band Panic starting, and that, and I was working up at a recording studio and for the *Easy Reader*. I was doing all of this stuff simultaneously because I had tons of energy and was very motivated. But, you know, I'm out there, I was out on the street a lot and I met these people and occasionally got into their practice pads and hang out and so after a while I got to know all of them.



MRR: You stopped photographing in '82.

Pretty much. I didn't wanna stop, it's just that I had to because my darkroom was up in Media Art Recording Studios, which was started by two guys who were doing commercial photography and they did a whole bunch of photography tradeouts to get equipment for the studio. You know, fledgling companies putting out a piece of gear: "Hey! We'll take a picture of your gear so you can make an ad, we'll put it together for you! But, uh, give us those compressors." "Okay, sure!" [laughs]

They did all kinds of wheeling and dealing like that. But they had no problem with me using the darkroom—it was a really nice darkroom, pretty low key but had a great enlarger—as long as I used my own chemicals and paper. They didn't care. "Just don't use my stuff," you know. Okay, great. I was in the darkroom all the time, and when the studio closed down (in '81, shortly after the Stains' session there), I didn't have a darkroom any more. It was a pain in the butt to get into people's private darkrooms, but at that time I was doing more and more audio work and I [thought] "I gotta concentrate on that." Without a darkroom I didn't have time to take photos anymore so I had to say...I had to make a decision, and the decision was [to] put the camera away. [I thought] maybe someday I could come back to it but I guess I never did.



MRR: Do you have any regrets about that?

Of course! I mean, I didn't wanna. You know, it's like breaking up with a really good girlfriend because—I can't think of a, maybe that's not the right...you get what I'm trying to say. Oh no! It's like getting rid of the hot rod you built and you're so damn proud of because you've suddenly got a kid that needs you, and it's like the kid or the hot rod. It was that kind of thing.

MRR: Music came before photography though, right?

Hell yeah!

MRR: You sort of came back, in an odd way. It's not like you left photography for something you weren't very deeply akin with already.

Right. It's just the way life was going, you know, that's where life got me. I had to make some turns. You're going down the hill and you gotta make a turn away from a tree or, I don't know.

MRR: Crazy. So, then you just got really wrapped up in the producing. How did that all go for you?

[Sighs heavily]

MRR: [Laughs] Should we just not talk about it?

No, you've opened up that can!

MRR: Sorry, I can tape it back up, we don't have to talk about it.

Okay, some of it was a hell of a lot of fun and challenging, and some of it was a total pain in the butt.

MRR: Who were some of your favorite bands to work with?

The Minutemen were funny to work with. The Descendents were funny to work with. There're too many stories. I'll just say this: I ended up doing so much work for so long, while losing so much sleep doing sessions back to back on top of each other. It was about 1984 when I suddenly realized I had to take a break. I hit a big burnout point because there were some things that made it suddenly not fun any more.

MRR: So before that you felt like you were having fun as you went along.

For the most part, I had a lot of fun. But you know, there were some experiences that weren't what they should have been and I ended up working with people who were a pain in the butt. And after a while when you're not making that much money and you're losing all kinds of sleep and having to deal with so many people's problems, the magic of turning on a tape recorder and running tape is just kinda, not really as exciting as it once was; you just can't wait until it's over. Whereas before I would be excited, I'd be saying, "Oh, I need to stay up another 24 hours! Let's do it!" Yeah, the rollercoaster ride came to an abrupt end.

MRR: I always saw your name on the back of records and a few years ago I got a print. I didn't even know you took photos. I was like, what the fuck?

Surprise!

MRR: Where did the name Spot come from? I don't know your real name.

That is my real name!

MRR: Where'd it come from? What's your last name?

When you've got Spot you don't need anything else. My family is very odd. There're so many different branches of my family and this came from the odd Scandinavian branch. My grandfather was going on about this once, he said it's like this old Viking Norse thing, this name, *Spaat*, that there's this kind of tradition, it comes down through the family and somebody gets it. Somebody in the family gets that name. And they figured out that I was the one who got it! [laughs] It's too complex to even describe.

MRR: So it's S-P-A-A-T originally.

Yeah. When I started using the name they were, "yeah, S-P-O-T, fine!" So there were fewer questions to answer.

MRR: What was your reaction when you realized that people were coming around and getting really interested in all these different things? Was there a moment when you were like, "Oh shit, people really care about this"?

I always had an idea that the stuff was special. But you know, maybe I could have done more to get that stuff out then but didn't have time. I might have been doing so many different things that I couldn't have done it then, but now, finally the right opportunity. It was like everything else, suddenly it kind of came back around. Someone else finally got interested in doing something with these photos that I always knew something could be done with.

MRR: Are you happy with the book? Is there anything you would have liked to have done differently?

Well, yeah. You're always gonna think that. It's a collaborative effort. Basically, there were three main people: me, Ryan Richardson, and Johan Kugelberg putting it together. Ryan, he was the main instigator because he knew what I had. After so many years I had lost perspective on what I had. Whenever I tried to make a collection it was like, I'd have to pick 30 photos and maybe I would end up with 250 and I'd be like, "Oh gee, I'm only supposed to have 30?" You know? You lose perspective. The forest is too big, there's all these trees.

So they took them and made their selections, and then I went back and made my selections and said, "This is good," "This stinks." It was a big back and forth. I mean, ideally there're some photos I would have loved to have seen in the book that didn't make it, and then there's some in there that I really didn't want in the book but ultimately I saw that they made sense. You know, in a certain way you have to let go. The main thing I made sure of was that the book felt like what I lived. And I made sure that it did.

MRR: There's a mix of stuff. Lot of times people just focus on just punk rock or just skating. I like that it goes all over, it seems more culturally significant, for want of a better term.

It was what was going on. There's so much stuff. I could put together the director's cut! [laughs]

MRR: The tome!

Something like the first punk rock section in the book...a few photos from that that got pulled. But because of other things that happened later they pulled a few of those images too...it was an ongoing process. But that first section, I was so enthused—I sat down one night and every picture had a wisecrack about it, and I wanted to put the wisecrack right on the page. I thought that they were going to do that! But the communications weren't the best between us. A lot of communications got dropped and there was a big issue at the end as to how come my idea didn't get used. So I ended up having to put these little wisecracks in the end, which I don't know, maybe I should have just not even worried about it.

MRR: But I kinda liked it, read a lot of that commentary in that in the back, and I thought it was pretty cool.

I wanted each one to be in a type that's so small you could barely read it. Just enough to where you could read it. But actually, what I did was that I went back to the original cut of that section, and I started putting it all together in a slide show. With the captions! "*I remember my first ride on the rollercoaster!*" [laughs] I haven't finished it yet, but I want to do that, get a bunch of people together some night at the local coffeehouse after hours, just get beer and whiskey and we're just gonna have some fun and look at all this shit. In fact, in February I'm supposed to be back out here, or at least LA to do this art gallery show, supposedly mid-February and that's what I'm thinking!

MRR: Where's the book taking you next? Are you touring right now with it?

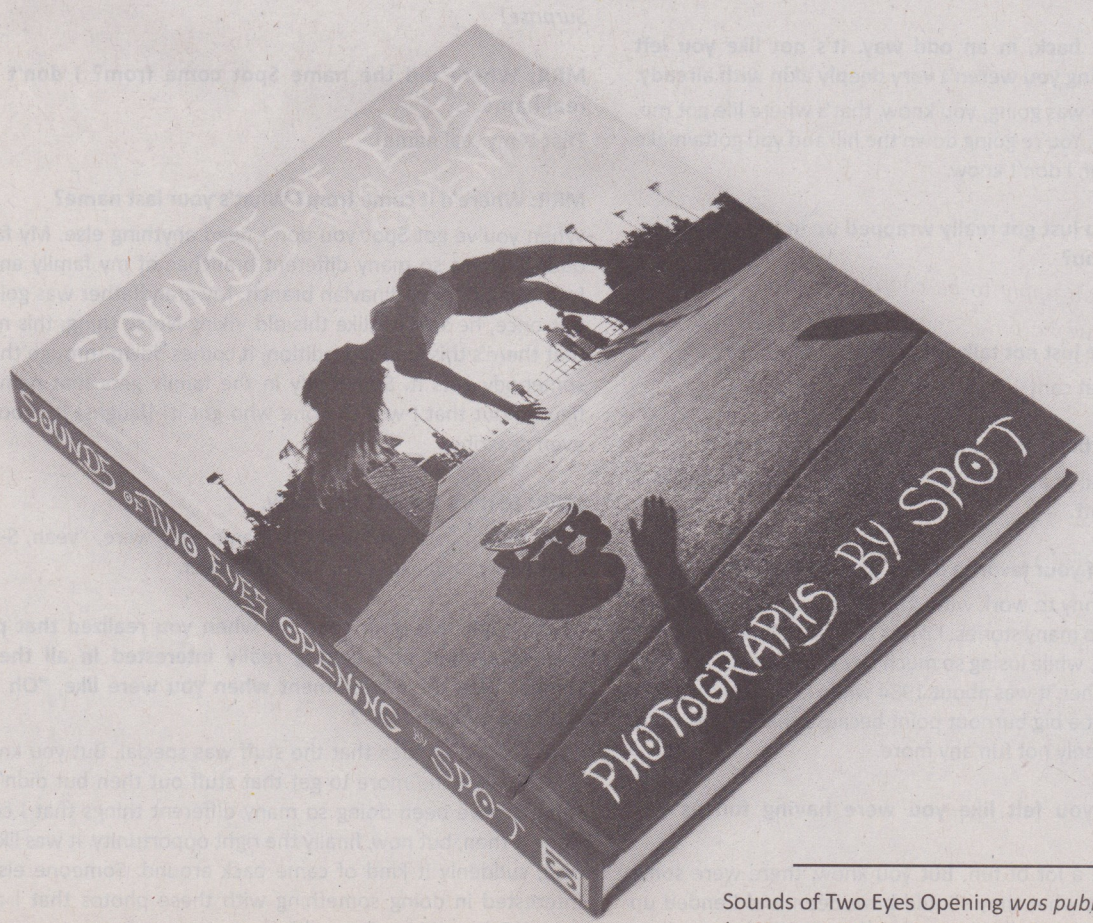
No. It just came out, I'm just doing these ding-dang book signings because it's, you know, I've got nothing else to do right now! [laughs]

MRR: Did anyone invite you to talk in their photography departments?

Not yet!

MRR: I hope they do!

You know, some years back there was some school or university that invited me to come do some kind of thing, blah blah blah, and I said well okay. When it came out that I didn't have a college degree—I don't even have a high school diploma—they were like, "Oh well, we can't use you, you have to have that to..." and I was like, "OK, fine," and hung up the phone and had a big laugh.



Sounds of Two Eyes Opening *was published in December 2014 by Sinecure Books. See sinecurebooks.com for ordering details.*

IN SCHOOL

If you apply to be coordinator of Maximum Rocknroll *you have to answer a question about who you consider to be your punk heroes. My list included the members of In School. Though I was later mortified to find out that drummer Golnar Nikpour, herself a former coordinator of this magazine, was on the receiving end of my application, I stand by the statement. I'll out myself as an In School super-fan to the world here. What's not to love about four brilliant women who also happen to play particularly raging hardcore? I have hurtled my way across basements on both coasts to the sounds of this band, always in the company of a sea of femmes and queers, fist pumping and knuckle dragging and shouting along to their indelible anthems of disaffection and fury. We sat down after the band's December 22, 2014 show with Pig DNA in Brooklyn to talk about DIY punk beginnings, inventiveness within the hardcore form, intentional space making, and the pure joy that comes with playing punk music.*

Interview and introduction by Grace Ambrose.
Photos provided by Martin Sorrondeguy, artwork by Jason Roy.

Bidi Choudhury: Vocals
Talya Coopter: Bass
Yumi Lee: Guitar
Golnar Nikpour: Drums

MRR: I always like to hear about people's formative punk experiences. Tell me about the first record you got really psyched on!

YUMI: I discovered punk through a mixtape my best friend in middle school gave me that had NOFX, the Descendents, Operation Ivy, and a bunch of shitty ska on it. I listened to it until I wore it out, and after that, I started to sneak out and go to local ska shows near my suburb in Kansas City. Clearly '90s ska is no longer my favorite music...

TALYA: I'm just imagining that Yumi had invented some early ska-influenced In School track. [*laughter*]

YUMI: ...but I have very fond memories of those shows, which were my introduction to DIY subculture and the idea that you and your friends could make your own scene, start your

own band, organize shows, etc. Pretty soon after that, I joined a feminist group that these two older punk girls from my high school started—I found out about it from a flyer they put up at my local public library! I remember borrowing the Bikini Kill/Huggy Bear split, the first Bratmobile LP, the first Kill Rock Stars comp, and a bunch of zines at one of the first meetings, and after that I was totally hooked. For the rest of high school, doing zines and corresponding with other zinesters, mostly other teenage girls, was basically my whole life, and that's how I found out about a lot of bands too.

GOLNAR: I got into punk through '90s mainstream alt rock. When I was eleven or twelve, I was really into Nirvana, so I read their biography and wanted to get into the bands they liked. For my birthday that year I asked for and received the following CDs: Black Flag *Damaged*, Sex Pistols *Never Mind the Bollocks*, Black Sabbath *Paranoid*, and *Velvet Underground and Nico*. I didn't realize that DIY punk still existed until I met this Argentinian hardcore girl in my high school named Gabi. She was mostly into moshy New York hardcore, and also emo—'cuz it was the '90s, when moshy hardcore, emo, and ska reigned supreme. She unlocked the door to the world of DIY punk for me. We went to see VOD a lot, and a terrible Long Island hardcore band called Tripface. [*laughter*] But we also went to see Los Crudos at ABC No Rio in '97, '98, which was a completely transformative experience.

MRR: Realizing that this is still happening and that you too can be inside of it is a very cool moment in any punk's life...

TALYA: I had the opposite experience—I didn't have any friends when I was in high school. It was the height of popularity for extremely unpleasant New Jersey pop punk, all these bands like Humble Beginnings, and Midtown, and what eventually became mall punk and emo. It was a pretty bro-y scene, and I found it really off-putting and I just wanted to play guitar in my room by myself. The first punk band that I really got into was Richard Hell and the Voidoids. That record just like, crushed my teenage brain. It's funny, because I remember thinking that punk was a very musically formidable style, cuz I listened to Television and the Voidoids, and I was a kid learning how to play the guitar. I was like, "I can't play this Robert Quine shit! No human can play this!" Then I moved to New York City and I met Golnar and other friends, and they were like, "Let's go to ABC No Rio!" I was like, "Whoa, ABC No Rio-core is so much better than New Jersey pop punk!" The most important show that I saw in terms of getting into DIY hardcore was Tragedy at ABC No Rio in 2001.

GOLNAR: Yeah, that was a great show.

BIDI: Unfortunately I was not at this epic Tragedy show—in fact, I was in high school in 2001 and was a grungy hip-hop hesher who had only discovered punk music two years earlier. My older sister and her friends would listen to a lot of '90s alt rock, and they would let me hang out as a wee middle schooler reading zines and listening to whatever CDs they would bring over to our house. By the time I began high school in downstate New York, there was one dude that would wear a Dead Kennedys hoodie, but the most "alternative" thing anyone else was into was Ani DiFranco. I would have my mom drop me off at punk shows at the neighboring town's VFW hall alone. At these shows, the local bands were usually too-cool-for-school boys who would just scream "Oi Oi Oi!" into a mic along to absolute non-music, which would generally dissolve into giggling and not much else. At the time, I really didn't get it. So I credit my sister's friends for introducing me to Velvet Underground, Mission of Burma, and Television. I eventually came across the *Killed by Death* comps, which lead me to '77 punk, DIY punk, post-punk, New Wave. I didn't actually like hardcore until I began college and joined our school's radio station! With these guys.

MRR: You all have known each other for a really long time! Since college radio—is that how you met initially, and then...?

BIDI: I think Golnar had already graduated by the time I started college, and we didn't actually meet until long after college, but I knew of her...

GOLNAR: Oh my god, am I the oldest person in the band?

YUMI: Just barely.

GOLNAR: You guys are babies. I rule you because I am the elder.

YUMI: Our entire band is actually so old.

GOLNAR: Talya and I became friends through college radio in 2001 or so, around the time of that aforementioned Tragedy show, and...

MRR: What was so great about that particular Tragedy show?

GOLNAR: Well, there weren't that many people at our school who were into punk, but we found each other and went to shows together. I had been going to gigs at ABC for a few years already, 'cuz I grew up around here, but that show was one of the best. In those years, ABC could be magical when it got packed full of kids. And Tragedy at the time was all of our favorite band...

YUMI: Not me!

GOLNAR: ...in hardcore. No, I mean like, all of our friends. We all went together. But the secret awesomeness about that show was that Selfish played, and Selfish...

TALYA: Selfish was fucking unreal!

GOLNAR: I was just really getting into international hardcore at the time, so for me it was incredible to see these Scandinavian people play this insane music that was supposed to sound Japanese. I didn't really understand what I was seeing...

TALYA: They were wearing like, daishikis...

GOLNAR: Yeah, these long and flowing floral shirts! This was the first time I saw a band from overseas live. It was something else!

YUMI: I hadn't met these guys yet at that point. I met Golnar in 2007, and before that I had never listened to hardcore, because as a young punk I thought of hardcore as like, "boys' music." When I first met Golnar, I thought of her as being super punk, and so there was this period of a couple months when I was constantly trying to prove how punk I was...

GOLNAR: It was very weird, honestly. [*laughter*]

YUMI: And at some point, I was like, "I love punk music, I love the Ramones and the Wipers and Bikini Kill, but sometimes I just want punk songs to be faster and more insane. Like, I wish that that existed, can we invent that?!" And Golnar was like, "That exists! It's called hardcore! Let me get you this Bad Brains record!" And I was like, "Uh, no, I know what hardcore is, and it's slow, and it sucks." Because I had been introduced to hardcore in the '90s, when moshy hardcore reigned supreme...

GOLNAR: I finally made you get that Bad Brains record, and you were like, "What is this, it's my spirit music..."

MRR: And now @badbrainiac exists!

YUMI: Yeah! It's true.

MRR: I think at some point in most non-male identified punks' lives that feeling of "hardcore is boys' music and it's not for me" comes up. At the same time, I hate the question "What's it like being a woman in a hardcore band?" which presupposes that being a non-male playing aggressive, fast music is a novel thing, completely forgetting the fact that there have always been women playing hardcore and punk. I have noticed that even though you all don't play a ton of shows, a lot of those that you do play have been events like Smash It Dead or Fed Up Fest or Ladyfest in Philly, which are centered around the idea of building intentional spaces in DIY punk. What do you think the use or importance of spaces like those is?

YUMI: For me, those fests have been among the most memorable shows that we've played. I really appreciate the energy and intention that goes into creating these kinds of fests and spaces.

BIDI: Fundamentally, we're all feminists. In New York, being feminist women and playing shows can be difficult, because the hardcore scene here is not really conducive to that worldview where support, access, and accountability are paramount. When we do play shows, we seek out a particular vibe. I think it's about finding the kinds of scenes that we want to support.

GOLNAR: We try to play shows with people that we respect and like being around and whose bands we like. It just happens that the people that we like and respect the most in punk tend to be women or queers who set up shows for other women or queers... [*laughter*] Though in all seriousness, we play all kinds of shows with all kinds of bands. Recently, somebody derisively remarked to me, "Oh, you guys always play shows with bands that have women in them," as if this is a problem! I wish that people would always ask dudes in bands, "What's the deal with the fact that everyone around you all the time is a dude? Have you noticed that every show you play is like, 97% dudes and you're just constantly around other dudes, like 24 hours a day?" And then make them answer that question over and over.

TALYA: I really appreciate spending time and sharing a space with people who come to punk and hardcore for the same reasons as I do, for whom this music can still feel radical and oppositional. I've learned so much from being in this band with these amazing women and from meeting the folks we've come across. So often, women and queers and POCs in punk are in a position of having to explain ourselves and educate other punks, just basic shit like "please don't call us a girl band," and at fests and shows like the ones we've played, it's a relief to kind of kick back and feel understood and legible and have fewer things to roll our eyes about. Also, I should say it's tremendously exciting how many other bands there are these days with women and queers and POCs. That was definitely not the case in the early 2000s when I was first getting into hardcore.

MRR: I thought a really interesting question that Bryony Beynon asked Frau when she interviewed them for MRR was "how do you want people to feel when you're playing?" I know some of the most empowering experiences I have ever had at punk gigs have been while In School plays.

BIDI: I think the simple answer is that the songs are all very angry, and that I want other people to also be enraged, and be able to experience catharsis through listening to this furious music. The rage is about different things—all of the songs are quite personal, but most are about issues that relate to specific traumas and issues of identity. Others are simply about ex-humans that were dumb and creepy turdhats...

GOLNAR: Ex-humans, like, zombies? [*laughter*]

TALYA: Exactly, like "Maggot Rot" is about zombies!

BIDI: That song is about boring, apathetic wastoids! Though I have never been and will likely never be straightedge, and I understand patterns of use and how difficult they can be to break. "Maggot Rot" is more about people who are ambivalent about anything that does not concern themselves. This relates to a larger issue I have with people who are angry because they feel entitled to objects and bodies, which is rooted in privilege; with pseudo-nihilistics who feign freakdom because they are just as obsessed with social capital as any (other) norm, because there are so many other important things to be pissed about. That '80s collective Survival Research Labs had that series of "deliberately false statements," and one of them was "if self-interest is your only interest, act accordingly." I have no interest in people whose only considerations are hedonistic and in climbing social hierarchies. I don't want to come off as mad didactic though—I guess these things just rile me up, and so I sing about them.

GOLNAR: To be honest, I don't really think much about what people are feeling when we play live. For me, punk music is actually a really private thing, which is a bit weird given how much of my social life is based in punk. Playing in a hardcore band is not about imparting information or communicating my opinions or anything—there

are much better ways to do that than playing this stupid music, honestly. When we play live, or when we play at practice, or anything, all I want is the feeling of how much I love hardcore. [*laughter*]

TALYA: Obviously that is a hippie ass comment but hardcore is truly the most fun music a human can play.

YUMI: Well, when I watch a hardcore band, the feeling that I get is about tenseness and anxiety and like... loudness building and wondering what's gonna happen next.

MRR: Well, that's kind of what I love about hardcore—the feeling of waiting. The formula is part of what makes it so compelling. You know what's gonna come, and still you're waiting and waiting, like, waiting for the breakdown.

YUMI: Exactly! And it's kind of like, the band members feeding off each other's energy, the crowd feeding off each other's energy. So, I guess that's what I hope people also feel when they see our band.

GOLNAR: I'm obsessed with the fact that hardcore is this extremely simple and very formulaic music, yet there is still a wide range of how creative one can be within the formula. Punk ranges from bands that are basically a slap in the face because they're so hopelessly boring, to bands that make seemingly straightforward hardcore that is nonetheless transformative and inventive and creative. So for me, the latter, that's the goal that I'm trying to reach in this band.

MRR: Despite the collective understanding you all seem to have that your music exists for yourselves, I am sure that there are responses to your music that you find frustrating. Has In School ever fallen victim to that horrible thing that seems to follow every woman who has ever played an electric guitar: being described as a Riot Grrrl band?

YUMI: I don't think so, ever. Which is kind of funny because for me personally, Riot Grrrl is actually a big musical influence! I first learned to play the guitar as a teenager by playing along to my favorite Riot Grrrl records, and that still informs how I write my guitar parts in this band. Obviously, when people use "Riot Grrrl" as shorthand for "all women who have ever been involved in punk," it's absurd and anachronistic and reductive, but I have major respect for Riot Grrrl, the specific musical formation. On top of that, I don't think today's hardcore scene is at all past the need for the intervention into punk that Riot Grrrl was making! For example, not being able to see the heterogeneity of women in punk—i.e. seeing all of us as just "Riot Grrrls"—is one expression of sexism in punk, ironically the very thing that Riot Grrrl was aiming to address and dismantle. This in addition to some of the more obvious lessons that a lot of men in hardcore today could stand to learn from Riot Grrrl and feminism generally, such as "Don't assault women," "Don't condone assault among your bros or harbor assaulters in your scene." Like, "Listen to women," "Women don't need your approval." And so on.

GOLNAR: We occasionally get "you don't sound like a girl band to me!" even from people who should know better. Whatever that means.

BIDI: A lot of people say I sound like a man. I actually don't give a shit—I sound like whatever I sound like. People just project their ideas about gender onto my vocals or performance style...

TALYA: Earlier tonight, at our show with Pig DNA, this dude came up to me and was like, "Whoa, I had heard you guys were an all-girl band, but I didn't know that meant you played a D-beat! That's bananas, that's so cool!" as though women playing D-beat was some kind of novelty act.

GOLNAR: Or when we played with Fucked Up, and that one bro in an audience that was basically a sea of bros came up to us and was like, "Crazy, a girl hardcore band! My girlfriend would really like your band." We were like, "Uh, ok. Does your girlfriend like *you*? 'Cuz you're a fucking dick!" Incidentally, I hope his girlfriend does find out about our band!

YUMI: I saw a writeup of tonight's show on the internet that was like, "In School is a hardcore band that is all women and features members who are people of color and queer..." [*laughter*] "Check them out, their tunes are pretty catchy too!"

MRR: "Check them out, they check all the boxes!"

YUMI: Exactly. It's pretty odious that anybody wants to categorize our band that way.

GOLNAR: It drives me completely nuts, cuz while I'm not a person who's like, "Who cares about gender, we just wanna *rawk*!—that's what Babes in Toyland says, that's not what I say!

TALYA: We also smell very good. [*laughter*]

GOLNAR: That's right. Apparently, Babes in Toyland was the worst-smelling band in rock history. It's a fact! Anyway, it's not that I think that gender or race doesn't matter; those things are integral to our lives, worldviews, and ultimately everything we create. On the other hand, it's both intellectually lazy and extremely patronizing to talk about us or our band as though our only meaningful attributes are our identities. I wanna be like, "Look. Between the four members of this band, we have been into hardcore for like 50 years." [*laughter*]

MRR: "We've been into hardcore for longer than hardcore has existed."

GOLNAR: I know, for instance, that I've always paid a little extra attention to punk bands with women and POCs. It doesn't bother me as a rule if people wanna mention who we are as people in a review. That kind of visibility is important—we have to find each other somehow! I don't think the answer is pretending that we're just the same as the endless sea of white boy bands. But it can be a bummer when people—even some people who seemingly like our band—can't speak meaningfully about our art or music. If you can't pay enough attention to a band to talk about their music, and instead all you can see is that they're women, or POCs, that is a pretty big failing on your part. For instance, Bidi's lyrics are not what I

think of as "message" lyrics. Although we're people with political and ethical convictions, we're not a political band in the sense of having polemical lyrics. I think Bidi's lyrics are some of the best in hardcore because they express universal punk feelings of hating the world and the stupid people in it, of feeling alienated, of feeling frustrated...

MRR: Well, it's like you said, you have a really well-studied history of hardcore you can hear in the songs you write, and people don't talk about that...

GOLNAR: I dunno if I said that—you just said that, thank you. [*laughter*]

MRR: Well, it's true! And it's also well-studied in a way that creates something new out of it, it's not just a clone band or whatever.

YUMI: Yeah, that's why we're "in school." [*laughter*]

MRR: Bidi, could you talk specifically about the song "Acid Burn"? If I understand correctly, that song addresses attacks on women in India. I'm hoping that you, Yumi, and Golnar might also be willing to talk about being women of color playing punk—do you feel like that part of your identity gets steamrolled or overlooked in the constant conversation surrounding femaleness (including in this interview, despite my insistence that talking about women playing hardcore as exceptional is stupid!)? Is there a lineage of people of color playing hardcore and punk that you identify with in particular?

BIDI: "Acid Burn" specifically addresses recent acid attacks against women in the region from which my parents emigrated, though it's been a particular form of patriarchal violence in countries across the world for at least a century. That song is about revenge and agency, though I know that's not necessarily an option for many victims. I suppose that singing about this is a way of expressing frustration and raising awareness about this incredibly fucked occurrence. Acid Survivors Trust International and Stop Acid Attacks are some great orgs if you are willing and able to drop a few cents to support acid attack victims.

GOLNAR: There was a similar set of acid attacks in Iran this past summer, which were attributed by mainstream U.S. pundits to a retrograde culture and to "Islam," as if the notion that women are "asking for" violence by wearing certain clothes is unheard of here. For me, the brilliance of Bidi's lyrics in this song is in reminding us that violence against women everywhere is linked to patriarchal standards that are prevalent from India to New York. That and the fact that the lyrics are about burning off dudes' dicks for payback!

BIDI: Regarding POCs in hardcore and punk, I remember at one of our first band practices we were goofing around when one of us used the word "annihilation" in a sentence and suddenly Golnar, Yumi, and Talya began reciting the rant-intro to that Crucifix song, and instantly I knew I had made the right decision in joining this band.

YUMI: Sothira, a true Asian American punk hero. Speaking of which, a few years ago I was record shopping with Golnar and bought a Marginal Man LP, and she was like, "Them?"

GOLNAR: I was like, "Why are you buying that terrible record...as a 30-year old?!"

YUMI: And I was like, "Duh, they're part of Asian American history!" [*laughter*] I have always been interested in finding out about Asian Americans in punk, from the time I was a baby ska fan feeling isolated in Kansas as the only non-white person in my local scene and got so psyched to find out that there was a Korean guy in Skankin' Pickle. Later, when I started making zines, I actively sought out other zinesters of color as penpals and friends,

and *Evolution of a Race Riot* was basically my punk bible—sorry, *MRR*. Now, I'm in this band with other women of color who are also my BFFs. One of my pet peeves in punk, actually, is when people name-check "women, queers, and POCs" when often they just mean "white women." I invite anyone reading this interview to think critically about how they are actively working to include people of color, queers, and women in punk spaces. Anyway, every band I've played in, including this one, has been with other women of color and queer people of color, because that is my community. Now, that may not necessarily always be reflected in the spaces we enter as a band, but it's OK 'cuz we travel with our own posse!

GOLNAR: You know, punk has never actually been exclusively or even particularly white. So many classic U.S. bands—the Germs, Black Flag, Los Crudos, Deep Wound, the Adolescents, the Fix, Bad Brains, Dead Kennedys, The Bags, and too many others to list—are made up either in part or wholly of POCs. This is to say nothing of the zillions of punk bands from around the world—in Latin America, Asia, etc.—for whom the term "people of color" is not actually apt, since they live in places where whiteness is not hegemonic. Thinking back to my answer about getting into punk, I have long thought it fortunate that the first punks I knew as a teen were other brown immigrant girls. It didn't occur to me at the time that this was exceptional in the context of my random New York suburb. Getting into punk this way helped me see punk as something that was legitimately *mine*, despite the fact that we just listened to tough guy NYHC. Sadly, not everyone has the good fortune of having their punk gatekeepers not be scenester-y dudes hellbent on making others feel unwelcome. For any young punks reading this stuck in scenes that feel too white, too macho, or too hipster, get in touch: I'll make you a mixtape!

MRR: Your Mickey Mouse T-Shirt is so great and perhaps the most popular shirt in hardcore (or at least in my closet). Where does that image come from?

GOLNAR: That image comes from old anti-Iran U.S. propaganda I've thrifted over the years from the era of the 1980 Iran hostage crisis. In the original image, Mickey Mouse is holding an American flag, flipping the bird, saying "Hey Iran!" I've found mugs, T-shirts, pins, and stickers with this xenophobic yet comically goofy image. I've also seen versions that are addressed to Cuba, or the U.S.S.R.—basically, any of the United States' enemies have to feel the wrath of Mickey! We took the image, turned the flag upside down, and changed "Hey Iran" to "In School." It's the kind of satirical visual gag I think is punk's aesthetic gift to the world.

MRR: What bands are you psyched on now? That make you feel that cool tension and anxiety we were talking about earlier, that take hardcore and punk forms and reinvent them? Other non-clone bands?

GOLNAR: We love Pig DNA.

BIDI: I'd say Ooze.

TALYA: Good Throb.

BIDI: The masters of the buildup!

GOLNAR: Yeah, they're so tense and explosive and insane and deranged-sounding, like teeth-gnashing anxiety-inducing, but then also that...

YUMI: ...pure anger!

BIDI: I appreciate that indignant rant style. "I wanna piss on your chips" is a phrase that I think everyone can relate to.

GOLNAR: Right now, I really like that band from Oklahoma, American Hate. Oh, and Sheer Mag.

TALYA: Piece War, Frau. Hysterics RIP.

BIDI: That band is incredibly poetic when you look at the lyrics. Stephie Cristol is a masterful lyricist.

YUMI: I love the Vexx 12". We played with them on tour this past summer and they were amazing live. Another favorite band we got to play with on tour is Distract Future from Chicago.

MRR: What is happening next for In School?

GOLNAR: We're writing some new songs, working on tracks for an upcoming comp on Not Normal Tapes & Records, playing a few shows, and just generally doing our thing.

inschool.bandcamp.com

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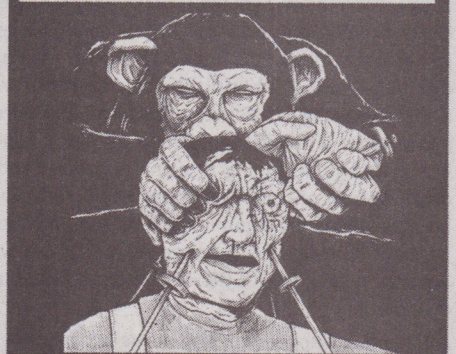

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2014 YEAR END TOP TENS

As is tradition, *Maximum* columnists, reviewers, and friends wrote about their top ten (or so) pieces of circa-2014 punk music (or noize, depending on who you ask) for our Year End Top Ten issue. It turns out people the world over want to thrash around in the basement of Power Lunches with FRAU and GOOD THROB. We're maniacs for PURA MANÍA and acolytes of LUMPY and his DUMPERS, worshipping at the altar of slime. If we're not careful, TOTAL CONTROL might make synth freaks of us all, and it looks like people are embracing punks playing pop music, from right here in the compound, where we've played the FLESH WORLD 12" over and over and over again, to all the way over in Madrid, whose JUANITA Y LOS FEOS have also been on constant rotation. We're mourning the loss of TOM AND BOOT BOYS, GAS RAG, HYSTERICS, PANG, and DESTRUYE Y HUYE, but grateful that they left behind a legacy of killer records (and glad that that VEXX break-up was only temporary). There seems to be a consensus among punks across North America that BIG ZIT, TERCER MUNDO, BLAZING EYE, RAKTA, and DOWNTOWN BOYS have unmissable live shows. PIG DNA? Yeah, we like that shit. And S.H.I.T.? We like that shit, too.

Of course, these are just a few of the bands that appeared over and over again on these Top Tens. By our count, we reviewed 1,304 records in these pages this year, each of which has been summarily green-taped and added to the largest public archive of its kind—and that's not counting the hundreds of tapes and CDs that also came our way. A hundred or so of those records are written about in the following pages. Bummed you don't see your favorite band on one of these lists? Write to us and tell us what crucial punk sounds we are missing from our worldview. And keep sending your LPs, 7"s, tapes, and zines in for review—it's the best way to make sure we know about what punks are doing all over the globe. Good riddance, 2014; here's what we thought of you...

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2014 TOP TENS

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

AL QUINT

Truth be told, the last twelve months or so have sucked on a personal level—not so much for me but for people I care deeply about. I've never owned a copy of When Bad Things Happen To Good People, *nor do I wish to, nor do I believe the tired trope that "everything happens for a reason." Fuck that shit... there's no "for a reason" for what some of those closest to me have had to endure this year.*

On the positive side, I'm still married to Ellen, the best woman in the world, have a roof over my head, some real friends (few and far between) who I can depend on and plenty of good music to get me through it all. It takes a bit longer to recover after a late night out at a crazy basement show and things creak a bit more but I'm not ready to throw in the towel with going to shows, doing the radio show, and writing my blog and this here column.

Not a bad year, music-wise. I don't think anything came out this year that's going to end up in my all-time top ten or anything, but I found plenty to listen to. It's sometimes difficult to get physical copies of certain records. That's sometimes due to scarcity, sometimes due to higher prices and a limited budget. That means that I have to be a lot more selective. I'm appreciative as hell for the labels / bands who still hook me up with review / airplay copies...

So here are ten of my favorite releases of the year—a mix of 12"s, 7"s and demos—more or less in order...

IVY – 12" (Katorga Works)
This NYC band's vocalist Eddie used to be the frontman for the late, great BROWN SUGAR and there are some musical similarities but it's with completely different personnel. A gnashing mix of hardcore, punk and garage, with an offbeat lyrical sensibility. Vocals are buried in the mix a bit, sharing space with this band's mind-melting amalgamation of drill-press guitar buzz and rhythmic thump. Fitting in well with the thorny, chaotic sound proffered by many bands from that city.

SAVAGEHEADS – *Wrong Side of the Law* 7" EP (X-Ploit / Twerp)
It's a good thing a certain friend of mine is a *good* friend of mine or I might not have forgiven him for neglecting to tell me about SAVAGEHEADS' final show a few months ago. Actually, I *am* still pissed about missing it because SAVAGEHEADS were one of the better MassHole punk bands to emerge in the past few years. Boisterous punk with a little bit of a UK82 influence that's tough as nails and also catchy as hell. The four songs are perfectly executed. These guys came and went way too quickly.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Another band I'm kicking myself for missing but I have no one but myself to blame because I knew about this show ahead of time and could have easily made it in if I hadn't been such a lazy asshole (sorry, Bryony!). *Fuck Off* is a perfect title because of the in-your-face sentiments toward the day-to-day harassment and abuse that women deal with, no matter where they are. All of this is delivered with Ellie's scathing vocals and a jarring'n'jabbing post-punk attack that has prominent bass plucking, jagged guitar and a blunt backbeat. Yes, KLEENEX and DELTA 5 are easy touch points but this is lot more caustic—and that should be taken as a compliment.

A.D. SKINNER – demo CS
Four of the songs on this ten-song demo came out as a 7" but you really need to hear the whole thing. Australian garage / punk / hardcore bashers, recorded by Mikey Young from EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING and UV RACE (among others). You can hear bits of each band in their tumultuous sound, although it's closer to what UV RACE do, in that it does away with any of that band's artsier (for want of a better term) impulses. There's a newer demo, *Dicksweat* (great title), that continues in a similarly raucous vein.

STOIC VIOLENCE – *Chained* 12" (Video Disease)
Sometimes you just want good ol' fashioned bash-your-skull-in hardcore and STOIC VIOLENCE fits that bill. Mean and stomping, without any excess, just an expression of pure fury. The title track, "Two Faced," "Choke," and "No Escape" are bruising fist-pumpers and "Empty Inside" is the crushing conclusion, with Branden Hutchins howling his guts out, repeating the song's title until there's nothing left and it's been stripped down to his emanations being accompanied by an ominous bassline. The whole thing's over in a bit over ten minutes and, sure, it might have fit on a 7", but the full-blown sonics aren't compromised and the disc is packaged inside a gatefold sleeve and has a full-sized fold-out lyric insert. Sorry to hear they broke up.

EEL – *Endless Fucker* 12" (Konton Crasher / Mind Cure)
I managed to see these guys twice this year and it was quite entertaining. At the first show, vocalist Jimmy Rose (ex-ANNIHILATION TIME / GSMF) came brandishing an angle grinder and, unfortunately, one kid leaned in a bit close and lost a chunk of his forehead (he was OK, though). Jimmy felt so badly that he pretty much retired that tool, although I heard it made a return at the Varning Fest. Ellen is getting really sick of me showing the YouTube video of that show to just about everyone who came to our house last year (although you can't see it actually happen). Anyway, EEL incorporates that power tool and electronic effects into a stew of punk à la CHAOS UK and DISORDER, along with more tuneful touches. It's noisy but not blown-out or covered in sheets of distortion. A new wrinkle on raw punk.

BREAKOUT – *Razor Wire* 7" EP (On-High)
Austin's BREAKOUT released two 7"s this year—the more recent *True Crime* on Grave Mistake, which is pretty good—but I think this is the stronger of the two. That's due in no small part to the title track, an inescapable earworm carried along by a scintillating bassline that ends up bouncing around in my head for hours just about every time I hear it. The songs are sharp and tuneful, while maintaining an edgy punk energy.

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe)
I still don't have a physical copy of TERCER MUNDO's 12" (although I've got some people working on it) but there's no way I'm leaving this out of the top ten. Just about everything I've heard involving Dave Rata has been worthwhile and this is no exception. A fair amount of buzzy, fuzzy hardcore but the title track, with its RUDIMENTARY PENI vibe, really stands out, while "Caidos" has a mid-tempo, near-anthemic burn. I hope I'll soon be able to slap a copy of this album on the turntable.

ANCIENT FILTH – *You're Nothing, You're Everything* 7" EP (self-released)
ANCIENT FILTH have been cranking out kick-ass hardcore for quite some time, but since they're not scenesters or beholden to any of the elitist Boston cliques, they're sometimes undeservedly overlooked compared to the better-known bands from these parts. Fast and frenetic, sometimes incorporating a melodic element or two, and executed with crack efficiency and impassioned vocals from Matt. Heartfelt, inspiring lyrics dealing with both worldwide and personal concerns. The elaborate package includes a fold-out poster and a lyric booklet with thoughtful explanations for each song.

ANIMAL MOTHER – *Seven Minutes In Heaven With Animal Mother* CS (self-released)
Another Boston band, this one consisting of four women and the vocalist is Jen Millis (RED THREAD, 40 WATTS, ST. RIPPER). This ain't exactly heavenly, sedate music. Raw, rough and chaotic punk pounding through the floor and Jen's vocals are pissed-off and nasty sounding. ANIMAL MOTHER have been somewhat hit and miss live but they nail it on this demo.

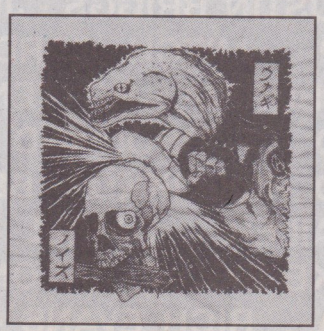
SOME MORE STUFF I LIKED:

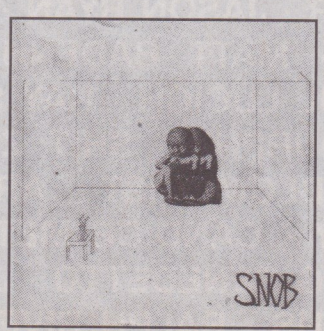
12": BRAIN F≠ – *Empty Set* LP (Sorry State / Grave Mistake), COMBAT ZONE – LP (Side Two), EX-CULT – *Midnight Passenger* LP (Goner), FARANG – single-sided 12" (self-released), GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse), INMATES – LP (Painkiller), RASPBERRY BULBS – *Privacy* (Blackest Ever Black)

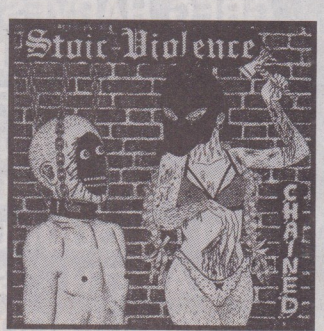
7": BAD DADDIES – *You Ain't Right* 7" EP (Negative Fun), FLACCID – *Scumbag* 7" EP (Nothing Is Real), GAG – *Locker Room* 7" EP (Iron Lung), GLUE – *Enemy* 7" EP (Katorga Works / Video Disease), INSTITUTE – *Giddy Boys* 7" EP (Katorga Works), S.H.I.T. – all three 7"s (Iron Lung / Lengua Armada / Static Shock), SNOB – *Harassed* 7" EP (self-released)

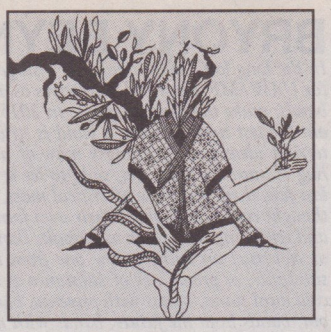
DEMOS / TAPES: FACILITY MEN – s/t and *Futility Men* CSs, FLEECE – CS, FLYKILLS – *Lump of Flesh* CS, NARCOMAN – CS, RASH – CS, WHITE WHALE – *Demo 2014* CS, V/A – *Cream of the Crop* CS

LIVE: ANCIENT FILTH, BLOODKROW BUTCHER, BORN WRONG, BREAKOUT, EEL, FLYKILLS, FORWARD, IVY, JERRY'S KIDS, ORDEN MUNDIAL, STOIC VIOLENCE









ANDREW UNDERWOOD

LASTLY – *Crazy Fucked Up Deadly Local* 7" EP (Hardcore Survives)
Sadly this proved to be the swansong for the absolute best of the '00s crasher crust revival bands, and with a little bit cleaner recording and a touch more structure to the songwriting it's probably their most accessible work. That being said, it absolutely retains the speed and chaos that epitomize the style. A brave handful of bands have tried to worship at the GLOOM altar, and LASTLY was far and away the most successful of the lot. If they had to go out, I'm glad they did so on a high note. Fortunately, the first post-LASTLY project, WEAKS, has already released a killer CD-EP that was on the short list for best of the year. Both records are highly recommended!

ASPECTS OF WAR / CONTRAST ATTITUDE – split 7" EP (Konton Crasher)
I can't think of many bands that have been as consistently fantastic through the 20-teens as CONTRAST ATTITUDE. They've never been the most heralded band, and I really don't get it because every release is absolute gold, the material on this split being no exception. Ridiculously heavy distorted D-beat which proudly waves the DISCLOSE banner without ever coming off as imitation, primarily due to their more complex writing style. I am so jealous/disappointed that they chose to tour the East Coast of the US this year. Boston's ASPECTS OF WAR hold up their end of the split admirably, I think surpassing the quality of their debut EP with these selections of piss-raw D-beat that owe as much to NO FUCKER as the classic Japanese and Scandinavian bands that inspire them.

ABORTICIDIO – 時々私は死ぬしたい 7" EP (General Speech)
Most people present these lists as being in "no particular order," but if you put a gun to my head and made me choose, this might be my absolute favorite record of the year. Nasty, snarly jagged punk that has absorbed influences from Kyushu noise-core and classic Mexican punk and squirted them back out like the discharge from a filthy sponge. Four tracks of GAI-meets-SS-20 hardcore and one perfect SWANKYS-inspired rocker that'll have you busting beer bottles over your head.

SCUMRAID – *Out of Order* 7" EP (D-Takt & Råpunk)
These Korean crusties' demo put me over the moon a couple of years ago, and I was absolutely thrilled to finally see new output in 2014. Even better, it put the demo to shame! These crasher crust killers put their own stamp on the style, moderating tempos and building to absolutely massive chaotic breakdowns, all laid over with some truly mean vocals. Like all the best records in this genre it's over in a flash, leaving you wanting more. Here's hoping we get some in 2015.

AX (マサカリ) – LP (Yashima)
Out of everything I wrote about in my column last year this was definitely the most asked-about record, and I really hope at least some of the people who got in touch reached out to the label or Japanese stores and scored a copy. These small(ish)-town Japanese punx are not on the fast track to international attention (I don't think this LP had any overseas distribution at all), but their brand of traditional Japanese hardcore meets posi-style had me pulling the record out all year. I can't point to one particular element that makes this so great—it's a total package of memorable riffs, charismatic vocals (and killer back-ups), great songwriting, and an overall cheerful vibe that never failed to put a smile on my face. GORILLA BISCUITS-meets-TETSU ARRAY? Yes please!

CROSSFACE / ORGANISM – split 7" EP (self-released)
This probably gets bumped up onto the list by virtue of the fact that it's a true DIY collaboration by two bands that wanted to do a split and didn't sit around waiting for a label to offer to do it for them. Of course, it wouldn't be here at all if it weren't also a fucking killer hardcore punk record. ORGANISM haven't had a release since their killer 2007 *Hope…* LP, and while they've dropped a singer they've retained all of the driving power that characterized that album, raging hardcore that stops and turns on a dime with some seriously tasty riffs. Bonus points for the cool instrumental intro that opens their side. CROSSFACE have never had a vinyl release before and I think they've flown under a lot of Western punk's radar as a result, which is a shame because they're a vicious band. (Seriously, check out the *Cross Days* CD—you won't be disappointed.) Their style of rock-tinged mid-tempo hardcore gives them a distinct DEMOLITION feel, but with a dash of almost-surfy DEAD KENNEDYS guitar that's all their own.

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe)
If there's one record on my list that I'm sure is going to show up elsewhere in these pages, it's this one, which is almost definitely the definitive Mexican hardcore release of the year, even though it was tragically limited to a scant 500 copies. It's a masterful feat of hardcore punk, reflecting 30-plus years of punk and hardcore history while never feeling indebted to anything but the boiling anger of three individuals living in one of the most fucked-up socio-political environments on the planet. In context, "brutal" is perhaps a word best avoided when describing the band because it's clear that this is meant to be cathartic. Soul-cleansing angry songs by one of the best bands in the world.

C – *Dear Fuck'in Shit All the Fascists, No More Nightmare* CD (self-released)
Led by Passy from CONFUSE and featuring a current-and-ex-members-of list as long as your arm, C is around to remind you that peace punk isn't all acoustic guitars and songs about butterflies. Taking the raw anger of *The Feeding of the 5000* and reconfiguring it for a post-Fukushima Japan, C is truly peace punk for the 21st century. Fucking pissed off marching beat punk against nuclear arms, nuclear power, militarism, nationalism, and all the other ills of the world in general and today's Japan in particular. The medium is the message and both the medium and the message are absolutely vital. Other bands (not naming any names) have revived the peace punk style but stripped all the thorns from the rose. C exists to prick those soft fingers and bring the anger back.

MAQUINA MUERTA – *Realidad Desesperada* CS (self-released)
I promised myself I would do my utmost to not include bands that made last year's list if they were at all marginal (so sadly, I relegated the new SOLPÄÄTOS and LIFE EPs to the runners-up list), but this European tour tape was just too bleak, too powerful, and too important to leave off. It's maddening that it was available in such limited quantities and I can only hope some enterprising label can convince the band to give it the wider release it deserves. Like the EP, this is the living definition of D-beat, a near-perfect marriage of rickety production, wailed vocals, and memorable riffs that leaves all but the most elite bands playing this style in the dust.

BEER BELLY – *Super Nonsense Pogo Attack* 7" EP (Nonsense) and *Smash the Sober Punx* CS (Pogo 77)
Like a brilliant shooting star, BEER BELLY was here and then gone, leaving only a handful of the best/dumbest/most fun pogo punk songs of the modern age in their wake. Faster and tighter than most of their inspirations and peers, BEER BELLY made the most essential inessential music of the year, speedy odes to drinking, pogo-ing and drinking while pogo-ing that reaffirmed the bond linking Tokyo 2014 to London 1982. Also their version of the BUZZCOCKS' "I Don't Mind" was hands-down my favorite cover of the year.

ARI PEREZDIEZ

This year was full of homework and newfound sobriety, which gave me a lot of downtime away from friends and a lot more money I could spend on records. This year's travels only brought me to dusty record bins of the West Coast and Midwest but I still scored these bangers. These records were the soundtrack to school garbaggio but also the making of two zines I released this year! Highlights of the year was seeing DAWN OF HUMANS at Berserktown even though I missed my bus to LA and getting a $15 rideshare to Portland from SF to see the first COMBAT KNIFE show. Here's to more punk winning in 2015!

RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada / La Vida Es Un Mus)
If I had to pick a number one record, this would be it. Like it's a modern day KUKL; it's fucking out there, but just punk enough for us to all love it. It's like these girls just holed themselves up in a room with a bunch of *Back From the Grave* comps and XMAL DEUTSCHLAND records. They are doing everything right; take a hint punx! P.S. It's pronounced *HAK-TA*!!

HIGH FUNCTIONING FLESH – *A Misery of Unities, A Unity of Miseries* LP (DKA)
I saw this band in a basement in Oakland. Susan Subtract's previous project BRANES had intrigued me but didn't do much else. I went out of curiosity and was basically floored. They play synth-punk, trying to capture that time right before the conception and rise of EBM. In a phone call to my bae after the show I just referred to it as "music that they would probably play in the bad guy nightclub in *Batman*

Beyond" and "If DEVO were like...goth." This is future music though; aggressive and direct, cold and dysphoric with lyrical body horror and a non-stop drumbeat.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
At first, I felt really conflicted about this. Am I old because I like this? Does this being like one of my favorite records show my age? It's *weird* and *different* but super chill. It takes aspects of some of my most-liked genres and fuses them into these songs that are really hard to place but just sound so right! Soundscapes explored through the process of synthesis and angular garage punk. I feel like this record was really needed to crush the total monotony that was 2014.

SIAMESE TWINS – *Still Corner* LP (Eunuch)
I love this record because it's played by people who were in some really heavy bands but this music is so sweet and tender. Three ethereal ducklings channeling ELIZABETH FRASER and bedroom goth romanticism. I waxed and waned about it in my review for this album earlier this year, but I can't stress enough that this record is just dreamy and perf.

GENERACION SUICIDA – *Todo Termina* LP (Doomtown / Going Underground / Symphony of Destruction / Trabuc)
Ratty and snotty melodic anthems, each one is such a catchy banger. These are infectious, head-bopping jams. I love them because there is such melancholy to some of their lyrics but the music is so upbeat. It makes me just want to cry and dance.

GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse)
This record is a beast! Hardcore that incorporates all my favorite elements of D-beat but with a super skeezy aesthetic like a BRAINBOMBS / TOTALITÄR connection. Soundtrack to late nights snorting Adderall and casing the streets for trouble.

LA MISMA – *Arete* 7" EP (Toxic State)
Vocal delivery stops and spurts along, descending into rapid-fire in Portuguese weaving around catchy hooks and some tupa-tupa drum beats. My only complaint is that I wish it were longer!

S.H.I.T. – *Generation Shit* 7" EP (Lengua Armada)
One of three EPs they released this year, but this one is my fave. I raced to their show and barely made it to their set and they blew me away. This is some banger-ass hardcore that is seriously ripping. Ugly, just how I like it. Beat my head against the wall please, 'til my ears bleed.

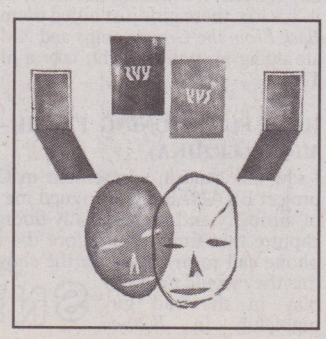
GLUE – *Enemy* 7" EP (Katorga Works / Video Disease)
Sometimes simplicity is best. This band captured all the classic elements of USHC and just pummeled me into the ground. I'm dead, blame GLUE.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal)
These li'l freex! Booger-eating music was big in 2013 and I am glad mutant punx survived the 'poc into 2014. This EP is like five minutes of riffs and unintelligible vocals, longer than most powerviolence songs but short enough to last yr whippit trip.

BEST DEMOS AND SHIT YOU'VE HEARD BEFORE:

DEMOS: INTERIOR 27 (Commodity Tapes), COMBAT KNIFE (Schizoid Unit), ARCANE (Persons Unknown), SPETSNAZ (self-released), BETA BOYS (Eat the Life), THE CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol* CS (self-released), PIG DNA – *Dom* CS (self-released), ISOTOPE – *Final Wind of Mercy* CS (self-released), AUSENCIA (Silenzio Statico), STRANGERS (Silenzio Statico)

REISSUES: JAWBREAKER – *24 Hour Revenge Therapy* LP (Blackball), CRISIS – *Kollectiv* 2xLP (La Vida Es Un Mus), ALERTA ROJA – *Algo Esta Cambiando... Y Muy Violentamente* LP (Lengua Armada), BELLICOSE MINDS – *Buzz Or Howl Sessions* 10" (A389), VEX – *Sanctuary* LP (Sacred Bones)



BRYONY BEYNON

In the long lost 1960s, anarchist insurgent group Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker (or UAW/MF) described themselves as a "street gang with analysis." To all good punk bands: make this your mandate in 2015. We do not choose to be born, but once we're out the test tube, forming a band is strictly optional. If we do go there, squirting our terrible ideas into the hungry maw of a hydra-headed sonic mutant child, we kiss it, hug it, nurse it to its feet, only to let it suck us dry. Why? This year, more than the last few, there is a sense of critical mass, a cool avalanche of groups that seem to have thought consciously about their own formation and done something new, challenging, and refreshing with punk as a result. Bands that act like they could take over the world, or construct an entirely new one from the burning wreckage. Bands with style and substance, or proud lack of substance as timeless style. Bands with weak stomachs and cold hard stares, bands with presence, bands with leather clothing, bands with their tits out, bands from the future, bands with no predecessors, bands from space, bands with intention. For all these reasons, I'm picking ten great records, here in no order, by bands I feel are doing something right with the band-form in 2014.

PRIMETIME – *Tied Down* 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Where else to start than with a band that formed for a "First Timers" new bands gig, and then created something that has a life of its very own? PRIMETIME's lyrics sparkle with the recognizable dust of everyday life, evoking the dark sadism and admirable self-interest of fictional-but-so-real dreamy movie girl gang punks CeBe Barnes from *Out of the Blue* when she plays drums for the POINTED STICKS or Third-Degree Burns of *The Fabulous Stains* when she's in peak tiny-untouchable-diva-mode. It's all self-mythology as survival, total runaway fuck-off-mum-and-dad vigour, girlhood incarnate, incongruous extra floor tom up front because everyone should have something to bang, right? The double duty drums make the whole thing thunder with an ominous grace, somehow at once both massively pop-catchy and deeply moody. "Tied Down" somehow mixes all this hedonist spirit with an undeniable almost '60s girl group-esque hook. At least one of this group would definitely piss in your cupboard at a house party. The Best.

HYSTERICS – *Can't I Live?* 7" EP (M'lady's)
An important band that wound up in 2014. Proof that hardcore bands can leave a spotless legacy without ever resorting to writing an LP, this record fused the early DC spirit and sound of the *Flex Your Head* cohort with the crushing raw speed of NEOS, piss and vinegar of JERRY'S KIDS into a tornado of well-directed fury, and damn near everyone loved it. They undertook a *Process of Weirding Out* for the second single, as every good band should, venting out a total headfuck of explosive build ups and breakdowns. In May of this year I booked the UK part of the HYSTERICS tour. Both the gigs I got to see were just totally splendid, and I really liked every member of this band as a human, realising I had really just been waiting a long time to meet some women who want to talk about BIOHAZARD with me.

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – "Gnats in the Pissa/Ghoul" 7" (Total Punk)
A band can be a group of people propelled by a common vision, but sometimes one person is enough, especially when that vision is *slime*. What truer goal of the punk dream than to have enough fun inside your own spiritual universe that others want to join you? Enter Lumpy. Ridiculous, stomping "blaauurreeghh"-along choruses, an undeniable ectoplasmic orgasm sound, raw, rough and sloppy abandon, this is single is perhaps the DUMPERS' apex thus far. Saxophone! Live, this was a close encounter with a freer kind of punk, certainly moreso than this shuttered Brit is used to. Naked bodies writhing, radiating love and filth and hope, stopping only to pogo. Punk's boring social ladder and not-so-latent conservatism seemed almost extinct, for a second, pre-broom. All truly great groups should feel like joining a cult, and nowhere is this truer. Lumpy Forever.

PRIESTS – *Bodies and Control and Money and Power* 12" EP (Don Giovanni / Sister Polygon)
The totem of the "hard working band" is one very often worshipped at, cf. *Get in the Van*, but very rarely is it actually lived out. PRIESTS from Washington, DC have basically been on tour since they started out. I was lucky enough to tour with them for two weeks in 2014 and their record is on this list because it is great, of course, but especially as a testament to the possibilities of Band as Live Band / Band as Performance. That is what Priests are doing. Their true (read: live) sound is more thunderous than this record implies, but this is still a taut and impressive collection of caustic, politically virulent post-punk dispatches, a long time in the preparation. It is again, rare to see a band—especially one whose style doesn't really allow for sloppy—play this *hard*. It all slots together perfectly every time: Katie a twisting live wire, Daniele a pummelling machine, Taylor a deep elastic throb, Gideon a smooth reverberating snake. Each element tap dances across the periodic table, becomes more than the sum of its parts, shape-shifting then disappearing just before you suffocate on the fumes.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
Oh god, it's time to get pummelled by the In-HUMAN LEAGUE. A second LP from that shimmering far, far away galaxy of Australia, TOTAL CONTROL remain somehow searingly honest, light-footed, fleeting and inventive, ploughing a furrow that's completely their own, coming off like SIEKIERA meets the PET SHOP BOYS on a particularly bleak day at the factory, when there were still factories. *Typical System* felt like that soundtrack to mechanized labor, flesh on the gears,

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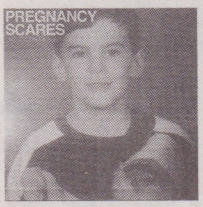

PREGNANCY SCARES 7"

NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS LP/CD

INSTITUTE 12"

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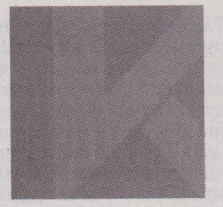
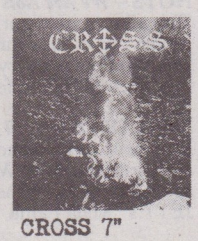


VOIGHT KAMPFF 7"

LIFE LIKE 7"

PLEASURE LEFTISTS 12"

TOTAL ABUSE 7"



CROSS 7"

DAVIDIANS 7"

THE NEW FLESH LP

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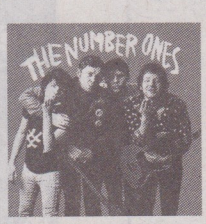
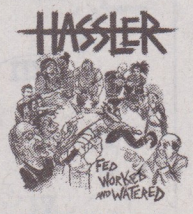
CRIMINAL CODE LP



THE NUMBER ONES LP/CD



HASSLER LP

STOIC VIOLENCE 12"

ARCTIC FLOWERS LP/CD

HURULA LP

2014 TOP TENS

the times when you've almost forgotten your own body, submit, submit, submit. TOTAL CONTROL are also that rare breed of group that have managed to achieve serious scale without any (overt, visible) kowtowing to the parasitic forces that traditionally swirl around many groups, writing records of this quality slash selling records at this volume. Whether achieving this is about being a master tactician or just saying "No, thanks" a lot, the results feel like hope for us all.

IVY – 12" (Katorga Works)
How many songs have you heard this year that just won't go away? IVY's "Arch-Foe," from this 12", was an unlikely earworm. So fucking great. The pushed hooks of "Sumptuary Laws" just about pushes it over the edge into total mayhem. Drawling unrecognizable vocals that do their own thing sit on top of a heady mix of galloping clatter, off-kilter snarl and toppling build ups, all falling apart in a splurge of force makes IVY a brilliant listen. This group being made up of prior personnel from similarly "weird but catchy" defuncto-punk gems of this decade, culled from the east (BROWN SUGAR) and west (WEIRD TV) of the USA, this level of sickness is wholly unsurprising. "My friends are spiritual healers."

IN SCHOOL – *Praxis of Hate* 7" EP (Kill Test)
New York hardcore/punk is an historically tussled-over tag that's been given on more than one occasion to IN SCHOOL, who would duly laugh in the face of your civic pride, shunning any one localized label in favour of total world-conquering rage on this EP of well-directed fury that leaves me, at least, with a strange post-listen glow of hope. This was really undeniable, a very tasteful mix of everything that is great, as UK82 style D-beat drumming battles trebly and acidic riffs, with a lyrical style that's sharp and baiting the dicks of this world to meet their bloody severed end. Annihilation over assimilation. Deeply smart punk delivered with aplomb. Smashed it, mate.

NO FORM – demo CS (self-released)
A short tape released at the very beginning of the year, this newish group from the north of England, with only a demo and some comp tracks out so far is mostly making on this list because, as a live band, they were way up there. NO FORM is the band that has made me reconsider the band-form and its potential recently, and helped me form the lens through which I'm writing this whole list. I won't be able to talk about them in this space next year because I'm gonna put out their record. (This may be cheating, I do not care.) Four barely-adults bare all in pursuit of a higher sonic/performative plain. NO FORM is, in effect, a hardcore band, but void of the boring boisterous bluster attendant to most current hardcore, filtered instead through some kind of underwater death machine, pickled, dissected, and shot through with echoing trumpet noise, booming fractured vocals rendered less voice and more of a loose, textural layer breaking in and out of the music, like the incantations of a guttural spleen-letting demon as heard from down a well. A great demo by an exciting band.

RAVIOLI ME AWAY – *The Inevitable LP* LP (Good Job)
Punk music made by people looking to do something more than use their band as a vehicle to cement their own punkness is a disconcertingly rare breed. RAVIOLI ME AWAY is another "create your own universe" band, this time from London (UK's) subterranean art world. The three people that make up this trippy triangle have made their visual appearance integral to the band, an uncanny triangle of para-squat costumed bricolage, costume, sublime genderfucking future feminism and liberation through body paint. Their cascading vocals and midi-melodies are haunting like a found-object nightmare collage, vying for space against drum machine, bass and keys, reaching and swooping with intent around every perfectly annunciated vowel. "Romantic Amnesia" approaches Kate Bush-levels of shouldn't-work-but-does-really-really-does melodic clamor, with perfectly perverse lyrics: "Do you remember the time we booked an Airbnb?" could be one of the most plaintively epoch-defining first lines of any song this decade. Like a lot of groups active in London right now, RAVIOLI ME AWAY share this skill of letting you view everyday situations and mundane subjects through a cracked lens, a broken kaleidoscope, rendering each one into something totally new and free.

PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider)
A new landmark in the ever-slippery Subjectivity of Fucker, I did not know too much about this band before hearing their record, a densely packed A-bomb of punk screech, their insane buzzing noize climaxing into a single groan of glory as the signifier fellates the signified, leaving only blackness and a decimated cabbage head of dead referents. All good noizy punk groups of today must know that the wheel has been reinvented so much by this point that it's less about pushing your cart forwards than it is pissing on it with gleeful abandon, having hopefully mutated into something beyond another cyclical nostalgia. In PIG DNA's case this is, apparently, Kawakamunism and the 420th International. Down in the dirt, shooting at the skyscrapers, grand pronouncements, obtuse sentiments, PIG DNA are being very, very sincere about your goal of the absolute annihilation of everything that earnest to "demolish serious culture." Which leaves us just where we started. Oh, you like that shit, don't you?

CAMYLLE REYNOLDS

I'm the mother of two young sons, a yoga/fitness instructor, and the frontperson for the band BAD DADDIES. I also review for Razorcake *and* MRR. *I tend to gravitate towards bands with women in them, especially women vocalists. Other than Good Throb being my #1, these are in no particular order.*

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Deep, primal, unapologetically sloppy, pissed off punk. Hands down, my favorite band of 2014.

FRAU – *Demo* 12" (Dead Beat)
What's not to love? Honestly.

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – "Gnats in the Pissa/Ghoul Breath" 7" (Total Punk)
Raw, with creepy, shrill vocals. It's straight ragin', fast gnarly shit.

CRUDE STUDS – *Night Bathe* 7" EP (Phono Select)
CRAMPS-style punk from this Sacramento band. Sophia has a solid hold on her vocals, with plenty of range to hit those high squeals, but gnarly enough to hit those jagged growls.

NOTS – *We Are Nots* LP (Goner)
Dark, groovy (yes, I said groovy), all-girl punk goodness. Much clearer recordings than their past 7"s, I could barely wait for this to end up in my grubby little hands.

LIFE STINKS – "Portraits/Sweep It Under the Rug" 7" (Total Punk)
Catchy, slow as fuck, FLIPPER-style knuckle-dragging punk to bang your head against the wall to.

COLD CIRCUITS – *Out Of Hat Yai* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger)
Complex, anxious, melodic, propelling post-punk. It's tightly wound and leaves me slightly unsettled.

BRAIN F≠ – *Empty Set* LP (Grave Mistake / Sorry State)
Solid album. Mid-tempo, straightforward punk, with rad female flat atonal vocals—this was on repeat for a large part of early 2014.

HYSTERICS – *Can't I Live?* 7" EP (M'Lady's)
Nothing fiercer than a woman's rage. For real. Just. Fucking. Awesome.

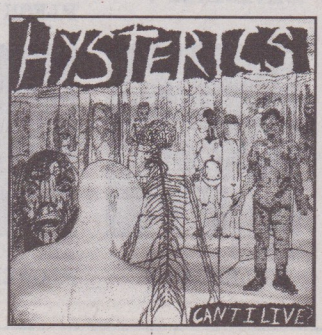
SYNTHETIC ID – *Escapement* 7" EP (Crime on the Moon)
They've got an off-kilter, but still melodious sound. Super catchy, it's killer post-punk that you can dance to. Love it.

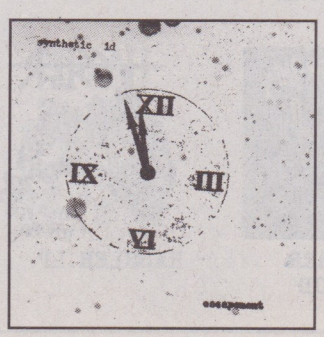
CAROLYN KEDDY

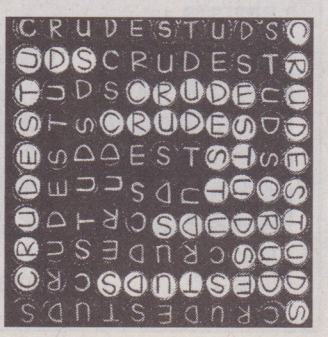
Wow. This year was harder than most. There are so many good records. A big thanks to all the bands who recorded them and the labels that put them out. Keep it up.

NOTS – *We Are Nots* LP (Goner)
This album could not have been made by guys. That is a great thing. The music is post-punk, but sounds otherworldly. Like nothing I've heard before, but still very familiar. It's very catchy in a tough, cool chick kind of way. How can you rage and still sound feminine? I love it.

LOS CULITOS – *El Duelo Final* CS (self-released)
I can't even tell you how much I like this band. It isn't easy to get me to listen to a cassette since my Walkman broke, but for LOS CULITOS I will find a way. From Finland, yet they sing in Spanish. Includes an excellent cover of JOAN JETT's "Mala Fama."







GUINEA WORMS / THE IN OUT – split 7" (Botulism Music / Sell You)
Come for the GUINEA WORMS, stay for THE IN OUT. Although the cover says "The Credit Cards Lied" the label and actual song say "The Credit Card Slide." It is a dance craze for the modern era. As is "The Stupidity." This record makes debt and dumbness fun. Join in.

T.I.T.S – "I Told You I Was Sick/Kashmere Trap" 7" (Pollymaggoo)
I love most kinds of music, but I always prefer anything with a bit of rough edge. T.I.T.S are what I am looking for. This is a trashy, sludgy, noisy mess of music. It is demented surf-y garage music with a singer who is letting it all out. Absolutely fabulous.

THE LOPEZ – *Travel Fast* CS (Machine Age)
Catchy, new-wavish dance music that is so fuzzy and distorted and messy. It sounds so wrong, its right. "Cubito Aequet" is a must play at every party.

MUSK – LP (Holy Mountain)
This LP is dirty, in the best possible way. The songs are messy, ugly garage rock with their roots in that weirdo '90s style that will always sound great.

BAD DADDIES – *You Ain't Right* 7" EP (Negative Fun)
I was completely shocked when I saw a three minute, seventeen second song on this EP. BAD DADDIES usually rejoice in the one minute or less song. There is nothing to worry about though. "You Ain't Right" is a similar feedback-laden, female vocal screech, musical shamble I've come to expect with the band. I wouldn't want it any other way. Plus there are three super short songs on the other side.

4 SIDS – *Kill* 7" EP (self-released)
Straight up English first wave punk style songs with a bratty lead singer. Starting this EP with a cover of ALBERTO Y LOST TRIOS PARANOIAS might suggest the band is taking the piss out of anyone who bothers to listen to it. But I don't care. This is great. The mysteriousness of the band adds to my enjoyment too.

FRAU – *Demo* 12" (Dead Beat)
This is what it would sound like if the Slits listened to hardcore instead of reggae. Eight songs and not one of them goes over two minutes long. Fantastic.

AUSMUTEANTS – *Order Of Operation* LP (Goner)
A catchy as hell post-punk, new wave delight of an album. The singer sounds so urgent until you listen to the lyrics which are about the mundaneness and frustration of our modern lives. I don't mind reveling in it.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: MANATEEES – *Sit N Spin* LP (Pelican Pow Wow), MIAMI DOLPHINS – *Becky* LP (FPE), VCR – *VCR's Greatest Hits* 7" EP (Barfbag), GIORGIO MURDERER – *Primitive World* EP (Goner), DANCER – *Rootbeer Station* 7" EP (Chocolate Covered), NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS – *Total Dementia* EP (Dirtnap)

RANDOM GOODNESS:

I just can't count cover songs as a best of the year, but I still like them. The best cover songs of 2014:

YE NUNS – *Nun More Black* LP (Tuff Enuff)
A female band covers the entire MONKS *Black Monk Time* album. As good as you imagine it.

WATERY LOVE – "I Don't Care," *Sick People* 7" (In the Red)
A lot meaner than the RAMONES version.

JAY REATARD – "Frances Farmer Will Have Her Revenge On Seattle," *In Utero: In Tribute* LP (Robotic Empire)
There may be one other decent song on this weak tribute LP, but JAY's version is pretty amazing. It sounds like a REATARDS song.

CRETIN STOMPERS — "Drano In Yr Veins," *Looking Forward To Being Attacked* LP (HoZac)
The ethereal vocals make this stand up to the original.

THE REAL KIDS – "Fly Into The Mystery," *Shake...Outta Control* LP (Ugly Pop)
A sparse, restrained version of the MODERN LOVERS' song.

SICK THOUGHTS – "Human Garbage Disposal," *Gonerfest 11* 7" EP (Goner)
A great version of the GIZMOS classic.

REISSUES: TERRORISTS – "Crazy Life/Cry Girl Cry" 7" (Going Underground, 1981), KLITZ – *Sounds Of Memphis, '78* 7" EP (Spacecase, 1978), PLASTIX – *Konsumier Mich* EP (Danger, 1981), WILD YOUTH – "Wot Bout Me/Anti You" 7" (Retrobution, 1979), CRIME – *Murder By Guitar* LP (Superior Viaduct, 1976-1980), CURTIS SEALS / CHRISTIAN D'ORBIT – split 7" (Windian, 1981), LOOSE HEART – *Paris 1976* 7" EP (Danger, 1976), ELECTRIC EELS – "Jaguar Ride/Splitterty Splat" 7" (HoZac, 1975), V/A – *Algo Salvaje Vol. 1* 2xLP (Munster), THE EXIT – *The Exit EP* 7" EP (Permanent, 1979), LIQUID DIAMONDS – "Aw Maw/Long Ago" 7" (HoZac, 1973), V/A – *The First 10 Singles 1984-88* 10x7" (Get On Down)

LIVE: THE LEN BRIGHT COMBO in Memphis, TN, JERRY LEWIS in Las Vegas, NV, ICKY BOYFRIENDS in Oakland, CA and San Francisco, CA, LIFE STINKS (twice in 24 hours!) in Memphis, TN, GIZMOS in Oakland, CA and San Francisco, CA

CHRISTINA P.

Another top 10, another lone opinion that people take into personal consideration for better or worse. Happy to be at the top, disappointed at being excluded, interested to find something that hasn't been mentioned before. Who cares... (I do).

Writer of Australian fan-rag Stitches In My Head, *I also do a monthly* MRR *column when I'm not failing miserably. Recently I started a small punk label, Blow Blood Records. I also do other odds and bobs around the Australian punk scene (mostly just write stuff though). Last year I did a* MRR *Top 10 with only Australian releases, and this one is the same. Write to stitchesinmyheadfanzine@gmail.com.*

LOW LIFE – *Dogging* LP (RIP Society)
Listened to the song "Dogging" so many times a few years ago—I couldn't believe it when I saw they were back in action and an LP was about to be launched. Depressing and dreary. Life is grey.

LEATHER LICKERS – demo CS (Cool Death)
Dubbed over another tape, pink cover and folded triangle insert, The cassette is taped shut upon purchase. The recording fades in and out (just like my POWER tape also out on Cool Death, they should get another dubber). Lyrics provided because you can't understand the rough barking vocals. Fast and thin '80s hardcore with desperate guitar wails. Stomping drums. "Smell the Glove" slows it down just a tiny bit before ripping it apart, the song that brings it all together. Weird and anxious. The end of the tape cuts to the Bollywood music it was dubbed over.

WOODBOOT – *Krang Gang* CS (Nailgun Murder)
Evil garage punk summer tunes sound like the SPITS with an Aussie spin. Childish and mean, talking about the streets and stomping around in gangs. Banger tape.

DRIBBLE – *Lovers* 7" EP (Cool Death / Distort)
Snotty KBD vocals backed by the druggy NY '70s punk scene. Kids on drugs, falling in love with girls, a sad tale of a simple mind being opened to the big world of normal society, while they drag their feet through syringe-filled gutters.

OILY BOYS – *Majesty* 7" EP (self-released)
Sounds like COMA but sped the fuck up. Twisted and angry hardcore punk. Only 100 of these released, snapped up and forgotten about.

CUM – *Fuck Cops* CS (Lethal Dose)
Intro cut from an Aussie movie, not sure which. Australian hardcore. Fast, heavy and mean. Breakdowns thrown in but they keep it interesting with warped guitars, enough to keep you listening but not enough to make it boring or change it to anything too kooky. Lyrics provided, referencing problems they encounter in today's Australia. On the cover an Australian police officer is screaming out of anger or agony, can't tell which.

WARTHREAT – *And The Children* 7" EP (Konton Crasher)
D-beat crust from the other side of Australia. Noisy, fast and unrelenting. Living that far away from anything else, they have a reason to be angry.

PUTKAH – CS (Lethal Dose)
Fuck, this Melbourne powerviolence band has come a long way and so

2014 TOP TENS

have the people that it up. Songs focus on Australian problems and titles include "Nation of Hatred," "Homophobic State," and "Invasion Day" (google the last one to learn a little about our history). Shared vocals. Tight, fast, sludgy. Not lame.

GENTLEMEN – *Cholera* 7" EP (Jeth-Row / Expensive and Time Consuming Hobby
Underappreciated Australian sludgy hardcore punk that fit in nowhere, which leaves them always falling through the cracks.

V/A – *Concentrated Visuals Vol. 1* CS (Space Ritual)
V/A – *Maggot Fest* CS (Bad Teeth)
Aussie compilation tapes! Two great mixes of contemporary Australian punk have been released on tape this year, with similar punk style and genre yet little crossover between the two. *Concentrated Visuals Vol. 1* came out off new local label Space Ritual. This is run by Jon, who fronts HELTA SKELTA and PRAG. The tape dives straight into weird hardcore and continues going in deeper, from LEATHER LICKERS to GUTTER GODS, SIMFUCKERS, and UNPEOPLE. It comes out the other side on a lighter, quirky and garage punk note with the PLASTIC BAGS, WOODBOOT and VAGINORS (sounding more DEVO than SWANKYS. A bunch of other bands on here not mentioned, some have two songs, most of them have one. *Bad Teeth* photozine also put out a comp tape to go with her "Maggot Fest" issue. Features a few previously unreleased tracks and a solid mix of punk. One track of new and old bands, Melbourne and interstate such as DRIBBLE, HÄVITTÄJÄT, INTERNAL ROT, KROMOSOM, LAKES, LAST CHAOS, SOMA COMA, and lots more.

DAN GOETZ

As always, a subjective list of records, demos, and live sets that made my year.

RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Last year's LP slipped by me at the time, but when I was told to not miss these Brazilians on their three month tour, it did not prepare me for their mesmerizing and otherworldly brand of dirgey, psychedelic punk. Live, they lit sage, seamlessly switched between instruments, and never lost power for a second. On record, everything is there.

GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse)
This 12" narrowly beat out TERCER MUNDO for the #1 spot. Taking what they already do so damn well, and breaking skin.

IN SCHOOL – *Praxis of Hate* EP (Kill Test)
The several-year wait for this record was worth every goddamn second. Early '80s Midwest-style hardcore backed with D-beat drumming and intelligent, pointed lyrics.

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe)
This band had me pogoing from the first note of their two live sets. Dark, melodic, and passionate punk from Mexico City.

OOZE – *Big Angry* 7" EP (Not Normal)
Along with BIG ZIT, these cretins from Northwest Indiana came out of nowhere and knocked punks everywhere on their asses with their freaky, raw, snotty hardcore that should be a litmus test as to whether you like punk at all.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal)
The best live band in the US. All the same members as OOZE if I'm not mistaken, and a similar sound, though a little more off-kilter musically. The frequent BAD BRAINS comparisons are definitely accurate, and I even hear a bit of GISM.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Jangly and pissed. Music for drowning out the world that will still stick in your head like fucking gum.

THE COMBAT ZONE – LP (Side Two)
In recent years, a number of bands have tried to fuse DISCHARGE and UK82 with early Boston hardcore, but absolutely no one does it better than the COMBAT ZONE.

CRIMINAL CODE – *No Device* LP (Deranged)
I love that this band keeps getting exponentially better with each release. I was lucky enough to hop in the van with them for a few days this year, and whether closing out New York's Alright or playing a sports bar in Maine, they were never anything less than fully captivating. Everything that's great about their live set is captured on this record.

BIG CRUX – *Ponchito* LP (B<X / Not Normal)
This band can do no wrong. At first I though that maybe this didn't re-capture the magic of their first single, but when they can keep me smiling through an entire LP, that's just as good.

DEMOS: SORROWS, BUSTED OUTLOOK, CONEHEADS, SLUGGA, FIRST WORLD PROBLEMS, SUNSHINE WARD, STERILE MIND, BLANK SPELL, TRENCHES, MYSTERIOUS SKIN

LIVE SETS (NO REUNIONS): RAKTA at all Bay Area gigs, BIG ZIT in Olympia and at the Nerd Castle, Oakland, TERCER MUNDO in Olympia, OOZE in Olympia, GAS RAG in NYC and at World Rage Center, Oakland, CRIMINAL CODE along the Eastern Seaboard, KOWARD in Oakland and SF, INFERNÖH in Philly and NYC, HOUNDS OF HATE at all Bay Area gigs, VEXX at 1-2-3-4 Go!, Oakland

DIANA VASHTI

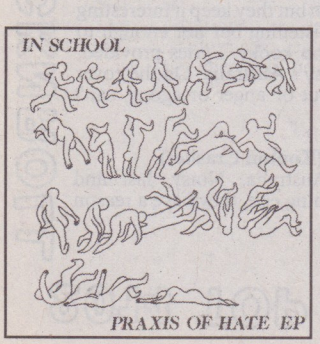
NERVOSAS – 2xLP (Let's Pretend)
This is a record I will be listening to for a long, long time. It came out just after last year's year-end issue and I have had it on solid rotation for the eleven and a half months since. There is not a dud or even a mediocre track, and more than a few songs that are as near perfect as you can make something and still call it rock'n'roll. I was skeptical that WIPERS-worship could stay poignant in 2014 but this album wins honors of most spins this past year, hands down. The packaging and band aesthetic are impressive and they also reign as one of the best live sets I saw all year as well.

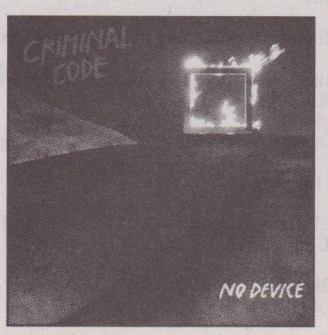
GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
2014's best opening track award has to go to "Acid House" off this brilliant LP. The smack and buzz of the opening bassline, stabbed with the gritty guitar call and repeat riff make every passerby stop and go "Fuck, what is this?" The vocals are snotty and abrasive, spewing over bass punches to the gut, seeping into your skull and getting stuck there for days. It's hard not to say this is definitively the best thing put out in 2014, but without a doubt it's an important punk album already, and one that should be in every punk's rotation, a very difficult feat considering punk's many tributaries.

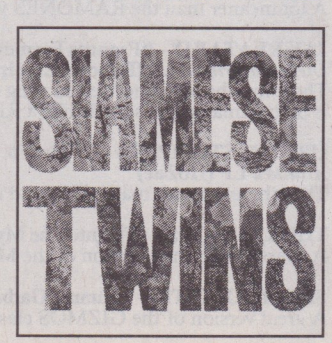
DOWNTOWN BOYS – *Callate* 7" EP (Sister Polygon)
Are you listening to Downtown Boys? No? Why not? No, seriously, I am not sure I understand why you are not listening to this band. When a band kicks down doors the way every song on this 7" seems to, you take notice. It's not often you hear something and are both blown away *and* don't immediately start thinking about what it sounds like. This shit is weird and uninhibited. The folks who said horns were coming back in punk probably didn't know how satisfying being right would be. DOWNTOWN BOYS' recordings make you feel like you are at a show seeing them, and I can't think of anything better to say about them, or I would.

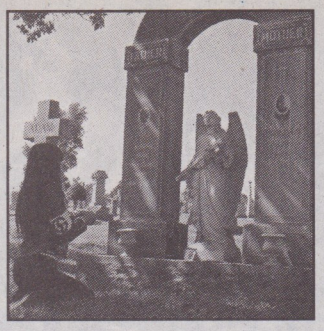
ALONERS – demo CS (self-released)
This tape starts with a sample from *Airheads* followed by a perfect riff. The second guitar whirls in. Twenty minutes of awesome follow. This is a very well-mastered demo, which captures all the tonal brilliance. This is riff punk at its best, a steady headbanger with plenty of ceiling punches. While the drums and bass are strong and more than carrying their weight, this is a guitar album. Every song has two perfectly matched and melodic parts, never wasting the chance to stand out. There's certainly some THIN LIZZY inspiration but with DC post-hardcore and hardcore roots. The songs are most easily remembered by their main guitar hooks, but the vocals are strong and the lyrics and melody fit the layered sound perfectly. This was my top cassette of 2014, hands down.

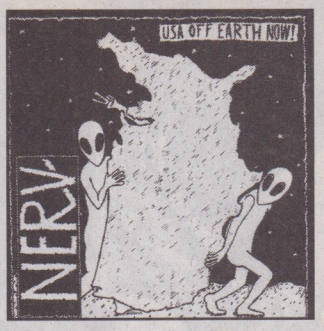
BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP
I wouldn't be surprised to see this on every single year-end Top 10 in this issue. This shit is sick. It's wild. It's raw. It's fucked up but completely intentional. I have to mention that their show in Oakland at the Nerd Castle takes the cake as the best live set I saw in 2014, and I wouldn't be surprised to hear if that were true for every other punk who was there. BIG ZIT is on some other shit











than the rest and I want all I can get; freak-out riff-wailing writhing out at the speed of light over punishing hardcore backing and BAD BRAINS reminiscent howls and screams. It's pretty safe to say that Northwest Indiana officially has something potent festering.

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe)
This Mexico City punk band simply slays. Already carrying a reputation for intense live sets, the second this LP hit the compound it has not made it on to the shelf because of constant rotation. It takes about 4 seconds to know this record rules. I had friends cancel all plans for a week so that they could see TERCER MUNDO at every one of their bay area shows. This album shows how infectious hardcore can be. It has enough riffs to keep the more pop-minded in its grips, and the power and punishing pulse of classic hardcore.

SIAMESE TWINS – *Still Corner* LP (Eunuch)
I'm going with "Submission" off of this album as Track of the Year. At any moment I might find myself humming along to the dreamy vocal melody of this perfect dream pop track. The whole album is really damn good. The recording is perfect for the sound, a floaty reverb fog with layers of gothy backing and shoegazey guitar riffs. This is the album that both the depressed punk feminists of the world and the hardcore kids with an emotional side can oddly come together to sway along to. This album has been my go to all fall, adding texture and meaning to a lot of overworked and worn-out nights. It's always refreshing to hear an album that can stay so tight to a sound, yet achieve such a range of emotions and moods.

FLESH WORLD – 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
This was undoubtedly the most played record in the *MRR* compound in 2014. I feel like I listened to it at least once a week all year long. It's damn good. Thoroughly a pop record, it's still absolutely punk, but in no way pop punk. Part cold wave, part '77, part post-punk, and dark and icy throughout. There are high expectations for a band with members of BRILLIANT COLORS and LIMP WRIST and this album shows that FLESH WORLD is coming into this world ready to take you by hail and by storm. All six songs are solid and "A Trip to the Living Ice Age" has one of the best vocal melodies I have ever heard.

GENERACION SUICIDA – *Todo Termina* LP (Doomtown / Going Underground / Symphony of Destruction / Trabuc)
This shit sounds classic from the first time you hear it. No second listen needed to see that this is a sick record. Straight ahead old school hardcore with killer dual vocals, almost the whole album is rapidfire 16th strums but it is never dull. Fast and deliberate, commanding vocals, and riffs that rile up one and all. I can't say the LA raw punk scene is where I expect to find my favorite jams but I also did not think I would have more than one hardcore band in any top ten of any year. Gotta love the Mickey Mouse cow skull screen on the back side of the vinyl as well.

PRIESTS – *Bodies and Control and Money and Power* 12" (Don Giovanni / Sister Polygon)
I have had the wonderful show to see this band evolve from the beginning. No band in 2014 is more deserving of punk recognition than this hard-working crew. This album was a true reward and more than lived up to the hype generated by their sick "Personal Planes/Radiation" 7" and their absolutely infectious live sets. PRIESTS are the real deal, and a testament to DIY or Die ethics fueling one of the best all around punk bands of the last few years. Hopefully 2015 brings us a full length PRIESTS LP ASAP, not to be greedy.

EMMY RAMONE

Hello punk, my name is Emmy and I live in Columbus, Ohio. My hobbies include cutting out letters from magazines, passing out flyers to people who don't want them, and drinking soda. Maximum Rocknroll *thinks I like good punk and should tell you the best ten things to happen in punk all year! I don't know if I should be trusted with this, I don't have a Paypal account or a credit card and the last thing I bought at the record store was a CD that I only got because the cover ripped off VAN HALEN. I guess I just don't consider myself the biggest record hustler. I do write a fanzine called* Cretins of Distortion *though, that only covers Midwest stuff, and the Midwest is small and the world is so big! I also have a column somewhere in the front of this mag called "Who Makes the Chaos?" and I am in some bands that are bottom ten-worthy. However I am excited to talk about punk because punk is fucking awesome! 2014 was an ok year for the tangible side of punk. Not too many super bangers but a good few. In my life though, punk was full blast! I gave Staples (where I worked) fleas and then told everyone it was my boss, watched an old dude sweep up a pile of studs at the TOM AND BOOT BOYS show in Boston, and got a cup with Grouchy Smurf on it holding a sign that says "I Hate Music." My new year's resolutions are too listen to 10000x more international punk bands (my blatant localism is fucking lazy), not have a real job all year, and not see any pop punk or metal bands. Please don't get mad that I didn't put your favorite record in my top ten! I bend the prongs on my studs one at a time just like everyone else!*

IVY – 12" (Katorga Works)
Part of a three-way tie for my favorite record of the year, burned into my brain like a bad dream. This is noisy and fast, it wind through choruses and bent strings just perfectly. Just get the fuckin record.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal)
Another of the three-way tie, fast and raw punk music that sounds like VAN HALEN covering BAD BRAINS. Is BIG ZIT the best punk band to emerge in recent punk memory? Quite possibly. This 7" fucking rips non-stop and makes me feel like I'm losing my goddamn mind. Absolute must listen for anyone who likes punk music.

OOZE – *Big Angry* 7" EP (Not Normal)
My top three couldn't have anyone else but OOZE in it. As you probably know, OOZE and BIG ZIT kinda go hand in hand as champions of everything fuckin' wild and crazy. OOZE has a strange quality to them that is less punk then BIG ZIT, it's got some guitar riffs that meet somewhere in the middle of VAN HALEN's "Eruption" and REV. HORTON HEAT'S "Psychobilly Freakout." ROCK IN PEACE, OOZE!

DOWNTOWN BOYS – *Callate* 7" EP (Sister Polygon)
The most extreme display of power I saw all 2014. Best live set by far, most energy in a 7" all year, and the most sincere content and motives of any punk band. DOWNTOWN BOYS is simple punk with saxophones turned up all the way and screamed at you, all while they play at 1000 RPMs.

XEROX – *Revision* 12" EP (Hard Art)
Iowa City has been home to some of my favorite punk bands and this group contains members of all of them and plays a version of post-punk that is more pop and less dark. This record has clean guitars and reminds me of ZOUNDS and late BLITZ (I don't know my post-punk) and has the catchiest songs of any record I heard in 2014.

MYSTIC INANE – *Deep Creep* 7" EP (Negative Jazz)
This band has some cool bass riffs covered with some wacky guitar, all topped off with poetic squeals. My favorite old band of 2014 was probably SPIKE IN VAIN, a band that couples really well with MYSTIC INANE, but in a way that isn't like "SPIKE IN VAIN worship!" They both have fuckin strange songwriting coupled with weird out-of-place vocals. "I Believe In UFOs'" has the best chorus of 2014.

V/A – *Early Indiana Punk and New Wave, The Crazy Al Years* CD (Time Change)
Indiana punk is my favorite thing ever and this CD is the best collection of it I've ever seen. Two discs documenting every band from ZERO BOYS to OBSERVERS OBSERVING OBSERVABLES, this collects bands that played a venue known as Crazy Al's that was in the South Broadripple area of Indianapolis and existed from 1976-1982. That was a time for Indiana punk that was pretty unbelievable and this compilation proves that well. Fucking two hours of music with tons of tracks you can't find anywhere else. This comp blows *KBD* and *Bloodstains* comps out of the water.

YI – *Crying* LP (self-released)
An all over the place. downright weird LP from Oakland's YI. Changing styles and tempos every couple of seconds, YI is far from anything else I listened to all year. Every time I talk about this record I think I need to listen to it more and then just get even more lost. If you want something new, or don't know what you like, or just don't have dog shit music taste, check this out.

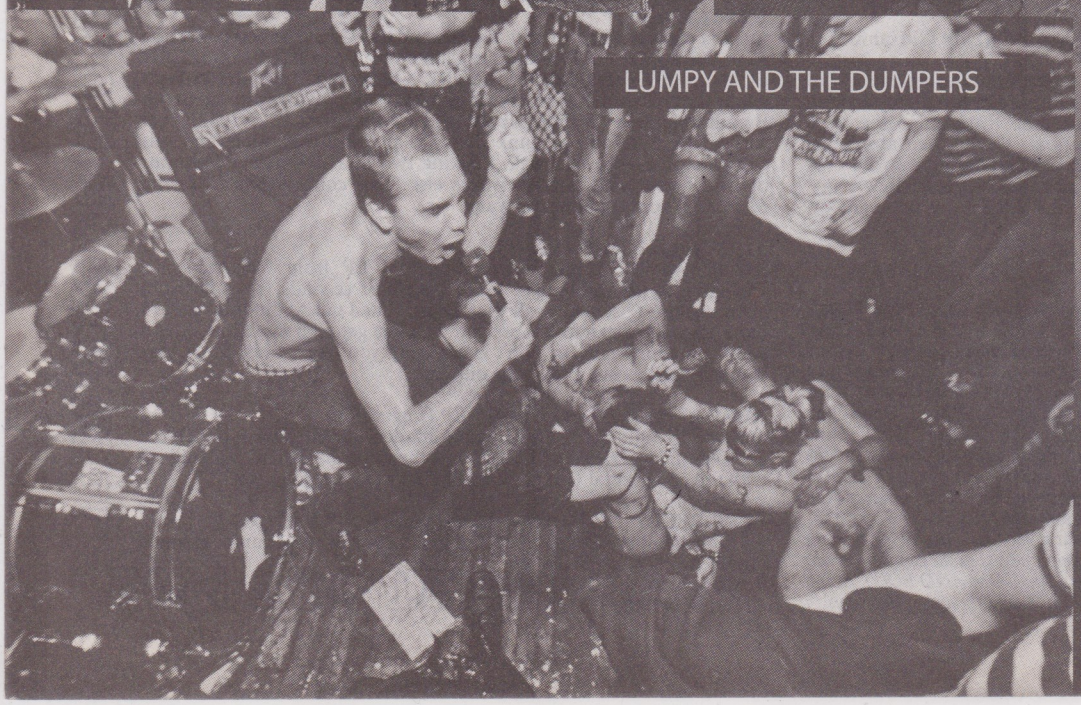
NERV – *USA Off Earth Now!* 7" EP (Lagerville)
Awkwardly unhinged '80s sounding hardcore from Iowa City. This is like D.I. meets DIE KREUZEN and the cover has aliens walking off with the continental United States. What more do you want?!?

BEER BELLY – *Super Nonsense Pogo Attack!* 7" EP (Pogo 77)
As a birthday present to myself, I filled my van with dumbasses and drove from Columbus to Boston to see TOM AND BOOT BOYS. Of

GAG

Punks at New York's Alright

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS



A few photo-graphic highlights for 2014.

All pics Martin Sorrondeguy

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VICIOUS PLEASURES

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GRAND COLLAPSE

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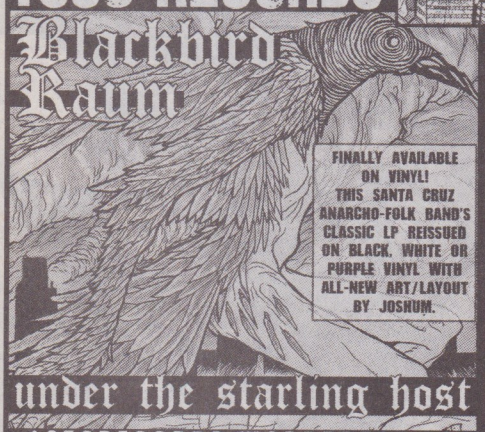

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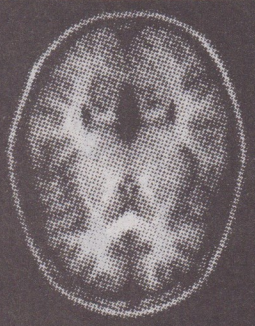

12" EP

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TO LIVE A LIE

ACxDC - Discography LP

An epic conglomeration of all the band's output sans the new LP. Comes on either limited black vinyl or picture disc, Snatch them up before they are all gone.

CHEST PAIN - Weltschmerz LP

Austin, Texas weirdout powerviolence hardcore group put together their opus. Think Gasp meets Swans meets Killing Joke all blended with some Man Is The Bastard.

FISTULA - Vermin Prolificus LP

TLAL's first sludge release and this one will melt your face. In the vein of 16 and Cattle Press, Fistula bring a handful of new tracks that twist and crush. 15 years as a band and still killing it.

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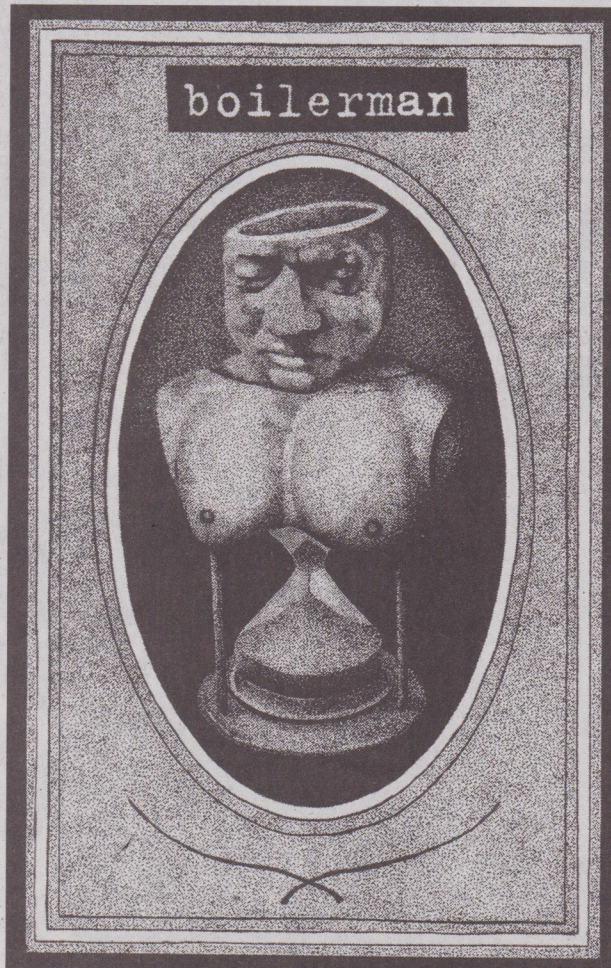

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course I fucking love this record. Nothing is punker than a POGO 77 7" called *Super Nonsense Pogo Attack!* and this noise really holds up to the reputation. Japanese street punk noise with surprisingly alright musicianship and unbelievable catchy songs. I had more fun listening to this record than any other in 2014.

TOP TEN TAPES:

CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol* CS (self-released)
The product of giant piles of four-tracks and sand. Northwest Indiana has proven itself as Indiana's Champions of weird in this new millennium time and time again and this tape is just more proof of that. This tape is spastic and fast KBD-style punk with a Remulak accent. I think every song is about killing someone. This is my favorite kinda punk.

ANTI-ZEN – CS (Hesitation Wound)
A short-lived band from Washington, DC. In my opinion, this is the D-beat release of the year: tripped out, less distorted than usual, and fucking fast as fuck. It makes my head feel like it's going to explode. It sounds like TOŽIBABE sped up as fast as possible, with the occasional devastatingly dark breakdown.

THE COWBOYS – *Volume One* CS (Turd World) I am fucking positive that this tape is the best rock'n'roll release to come out all year. I don't know shit about rock'n'roll, I took a rock'n'roll history class in college and failed it but I know that this tape is better than everything else considered rock'n'roll in 2014. The bass is insanely fast and all over the place and coupled with the classic vocals give it a psyched out sound that seems really natural. This sounds like if LOS SAICOS had been brought a PRIMUS CD from the future and just fucked lost it.

V/A – *Easier Said Than Done: A Philly Punk Comp* CS (Released by Philly Punk, World Gone Mad distribution)
A proper compilation documenting one of the best punk scenes in the US right now. Compilations curated due to geography are my fucking favorite things ever and this is a good one. Filled with everything from D-beat, RAMONES-core, metal, and whatever COOL LIFE is. This does a good job documenting the awesome bands everyone should know as well as the bands that probably won't have many releases and notoriety outside of this comp.

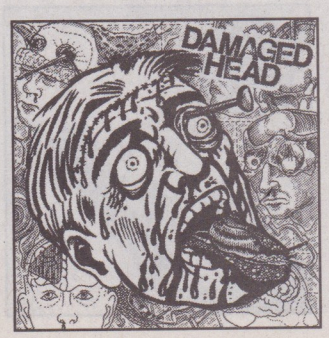
CHUD – *July 2014* CS (Turd World)
Aggressive punk music meets rock'n'roll from Bloomington. Equal parts FLIPPER, MEAT PUPPETS, and DEAD BOYS, CHUD takes a side of the weirdness different from a lot of bands right now. This tape is fucking great; it's fast and angry as ever and really builds off of their *July* Demo from 2013. The cover of "What Love Is" by DEAD BOYS on this tape really takes it to another world.

THE HOLIDAYS – *Secret Tape* CS (self-released)
If you don't know what the HOLIDAYS are by now it's time to fucking find out punk! This is a single weirdo making some of the best and catchiest punk possible with the pure motive of making you stay punk forever. The HOLIDAYS is one guy named Jim, a four-track tape recorder, and a lot of love for the RAMONES unleashed uglier than you thought possible. Each HOLIDAYS tape has sounds like "the perfect punk" tape to me and that is probably because it is the perfect punk band. Nothing but pure DIY dedication coming through your speakers.

ANIMAL MOTHER – *Seven Minutes in Heaven with…* CS (self-released)
Boston punk that sounds as solid and punk as all the other Boston shit. Fast classic punk with metallic riffs high in the mix, the vocals sound like the BAGS and everyone in this band looks like they could be in the PLASMATICS. "Huff, puff, suck / That's Animal Mother."

BLANK SPELL – demo CS (World Gone Mad)
Darker punk meets UK82 from Philly. Driving riffs and repetitive drums, finally a US band that can be spooky and not a total snooze!

NUCLEAR MOMS – CS (self-released)
Columbus' hottest new band, this shit is awesome. This tape was definitely wins as my favorite surprise of 2014. Bass and drums played fast with catchy dark riffs and aggressive vocals. Whenever you think you got this band figured out they splat into a riff completely off cuff from the rest of the tape.



KING WORM – *No Future City* CS (Ooey Gooey)
Wild and crazy punk! This shit is all over the place in the best way. Springfield, IL has a fucking sweet scene and this tape is its best display of that yet in my opinion. It's got fast songs with catchy riffs that make me want to jump as high as I can and slow dragging ones that make you want to lace up some boots. Quality *punk.*

FELIX HAVOC

This was an odd year for me record-wise. I sold my house and bought a fixer upper which I am renovating. As a result, my record collection has been in storage since May. I have been pretty wrapped up in fixing up the new place and not buying as many new releases as I normally would. I probably missed a lot records, and there are some which I haven't gotten yet, which may have made it to this list. Since I run a distro, I am pretty shocked at how little interest there is in a lot of these bands. Perhaps people are listening online or buying from other distros, but level of interest seems to be pretty low relative to the quality of the content. Or perhaps my tastes are just that out of skew with the record-buying public. For what it's worth then here goes…

GLUE – *Enemy* 7" EP (Katorga Works / Video Disease)
I read about this band in this magazine, and ordered their 7" right away. For some reason this band reminds me of early '80s NYHC like Abused, Antidote, and the like. Raw hardcore with an '82 New York vibe.

DISSEKERAD – LP (Man In Decline) & *Attack* 7" EP (D-Takt & Råpunk / Phobia / Skrammel)
Swedish hardcore in the TOTALITÄR vein, with Poffen on vocals. No contest here.

PROCESS – *Our Future? What Future?* LP (Urgent Warning)
Raw punk from Florida that doesn't break any new ground, but it's totally solid; driving, catchy riffs—a great sound. I never get sick of well-executed raw punk like this.

ECTOPLASM – *Stockholm Syndrome* 7" EP (Distort Reality)
Another Florida raw punk band, this one more blown-out, aggressive HC.

MAAILMANLOPPU – *Haista Vittu Maailma* 7" EP (Combat Rock)
Another banger from this band, Finnish hardcore done just right.

IRRITATION – *Nattsvart Framtid* 12" (Embrace My Funeral / Opposition / Phobia / Rawmantic Disasters / Svoboda)
Swedish hardcore in the SKITSYSTEM tradition. Has just the right metallic Kang crunch with some fast raging HC. They just dropped a 7" as well.

ANGER BURNING side of split LP with EARTH CRUST DISPLACEMENT (Aktiver Aufstand In Plastik / Rawmantic Disasters / Spela Snabbare)
Top shelf Swedish D-beat, notable for spawning side project HEAVY NUKES. I actually enjoyed this side of the split LP more than the Heavy Nukes LP.

HEAVY NUKES – 12" (Rawmantic Disasters / Static Age)
Follow-up to the top tier crusher of a 7". Not as strong as the 7", but still great SHITLICKERS-style raw punk.

DAMAGED HEAD – *I Hate My Neighborhood* single sided 12" (Man In Decline)
This Malmö band has a classic Umeå sound, fast-paced '80s style American hardcore the way the Swedes play it. Reminds me a lot of CAREER SUICIDE.

GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse)
Probably the best live band I saw all year. A great mix of American and European '80s hardcore styles. Tons of energy and catchy riffs. Top band for me.

PARASIT – *Your Polluted Soul* 7" EP (Nuclear Fear)
I liked the LP more, but this is still some great Swedish hardcore.

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

In terms of human existence, 2014 was a true shitshow. Cops killed kids, drones killed everyone, our worst suspicions about U.S.-led torture were confirmed, and the iron heel of capitalism nearly stomped the life out of us once and for all. Nonetheless, there was the slimmest of silver linings: from my vantage point, 2014 was a truly impressive year for DIY punk and hardcore. With only a couple of interruptions due to laziness and/or cynicism, I've been doing these MRR *best of lists since 2004. Sitting here today with very little hindsight but even less reason to sugarcoat, I assert that 2014 has been the best year for punk music in my decade writing for this fanzine. Punk rock is approximately a million years old, and has died approximately a billion deaths, so it is no small feat that it still does not (totally) suck. This accomplishment, of course, is no thanks to the myriad poseurs and dilettantes who still abound in this scene. The below list is not quite a top ten, because ten is an arbitrary number and because I cannot be put in a box. The entries are in no order after the second item listed. And please remember, kids: if you are apolitical in 2015 and beyond, you are doing this wrong.*

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
2014 TOP TENS

2014 TOP TENS

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider)
PIG DNA – *DOM (Demonstrate Overpowering Might)* CS (Commodity Tapes)
The first time I saw PIG DNA (in 2012), they were a shambolic, incompetent mess of a three-piece bashing on their instruments like sociopathic toddlers on LSD. Naturally, it was love at first sight. Fast forward a couple of years, and the Piggies have moved from East to Least Coast, added one of the most ferocious and intimidating vocalists I've ever seen to their ragtag clan, and put out some of the most inventive, gnarly, exhilarating examples of chaos non musica in punk history. Borrowing amply from the feedback-mangled template first invented by a host of Japanese/Scandinavian/Brazilian bands and most recently perfected by LEBENDEN TOTEN, but featuring a more to-the-point vocal delivery than their caterwauling PDX counterparts, Pig DNA is the absolute stone cold cream of the otherwise-limp current crop of bands posing as noize punks. Best of all, their ability to not take themselves (or their love of this idiotic music) too seriously while remaining deadly serious about their craft truly stands out among the paint-by-numbers pretenders you bad taste shit likers seem to like so much. And, the craziest thing of all is that as good as these recordings are, Pig DNA is that much more eye- (and eardrum-) popping live. Bow down and worship.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
GOOD THROB – *Live On WFMU* CS (Muscle Horse)
London was where the punk revolution was at in 2014, and LDN's GOOD THROB was the city's vanguard, giving us both the long-player and cassette of the year. GOOD THROB is good at a lot of little things that add up to a near-perfect whole: weird, jagged, catchy guitar and bass parts; agitated, anxious songs about city living; bitter, incisive, sarcastic lyrics telling assholes to get fucked. But the best thing about GOOD THROB is their singer KY Ellie, whose quintessentially punk glass-shards-across-bloody-throat vocals transform simple lyrical lines (and creepy shrieks and screams) into threats to cut a motherfucker. And, at the risk of getting all emo, I'll also say that this is the band I *related* to most in 2014. Their music was my therapy. Yet another gross dude did/said something sketchy to me on the street? I listened to GOOD THROB. The grind of work made me feel like shit? I listened to GOOD THROB. Our sick society made me feel nauseous and rotten again? I listened to GOOD THROB. Yes friends, *Fuck Off* is soul music for our desperate times.

(A word to the wise: the live tape shouldn't be an afterthought. Its loose, raw recording might render it even more mandatory than the essential LP. Do not fool yourself into believing you can live without it.)

PRIMETIME – *Tied Down* 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
PRIMETIME also hails from London, which as I mention above was 2014 punk ground zero. But unlike GODO THROB, PRIMETIME dwells not so much in venom and spite but in the cheeky funtimes of the great lo-fi feminist punk of the UKDIY era. Reminding me of nothing so much as an updated take on the bedroom music joie de vivre of bands like GIRLS AT OUR BEST—but with punky shout/sung group vocals—Primetime delivered the mixtape (and single girl's) anthem of the year, "Tied Down." "I want your body not your mind / don't wanna see you all the time." Perfect.

SHEER MAG – *What You Want* 7" EP (Wilsuns RC)
Not since MILK MUSIC's debut—or maybe I need to go even further back to the great EXPLODING HEARTS?—has a band reminded me of how much I love simple, classic, memorable, punky rock'n'roll. Unlike those two heavyweights, however, Sheer Mag's debut EP is both extremely catchy and extremely lo-fi. Even from my turntable in this dead of winter, *What You Want* sounds like a third generation dub of a favorite summer mixtape blissfully blaring from a shitty boombox. I've seen any number of bands referenced in reviews of this group: THIN LIZZY, the SHIVVERS, KISS, the NERVES, BLONDIE, CHEAP TRICK, etc. No one of these reference points truly hits the mark, particularly given the differences in production values between the 'MAG and the aforementioned. Still, this extraordinary chain of comparisons should at least give you a sense of what to expect: guitar solos, massive hooks, and charismatic vocals, all adding up to flawless pop songs. Seriously, I think I've listened to this record close to a hundred times this year! Given the greatness of this EP, I am both excited and nervous for what 2015 holds for this band—will they be able to replicate this sound/feeling, or will they become a Proper Rock Band (and get boring in the process)? Meet me here next year for the results!

VEXX – 12" (Grazer / M'lady's)
In truth, this record was released in the last weeks of 2013 in a too-small pressing, and as of this writing its promised 2014 repress on M'lady's has only surfaced on cassette with the vinyl still forthcoming. In any case, *Stress* would be an instant classic taken against the best punk records of any year (or any decade, really). The guitar parts are unhinged, Maryjane's vocals are barely contained primal energy, the drumming is totally bonkers, and the recording perfectly captures VEXX' signature mix of violence / brilliance. VEXX is one of those bands that seems like they should appeal to hardcore kids, spiky punx, garage rockers, and art punks equally; they invite us all to finally throw all our genre restrictions and dumb rules into the trash and live out the rest of our days doing the pogo.

MYSTIC INANE – *Deep Creep* 7" EP (Negative Jazz)
New Orleans' Mystic Inane followed their awesome but too-little-heard 2013 demo cassette with this monstrous debut EP in 2014. Somehow, and with no discernable pretention, the songs on *Deep Creep* combine the best of a number of distinctly American punk traditions: the dark, antisocial freak vibes of bands like NO TREND, the blistering classics of USHC (think MECHT MENSCH, or more recent ragers like SEX VID), and the restless energy of some of the weirdness on the classic-era SST roster. If this seems like suspiciously high praise for a current band, I dare you to listen to MYSTIC INANE and not be blown away. This is the hardcore record of the year, non-PIG DNA division.

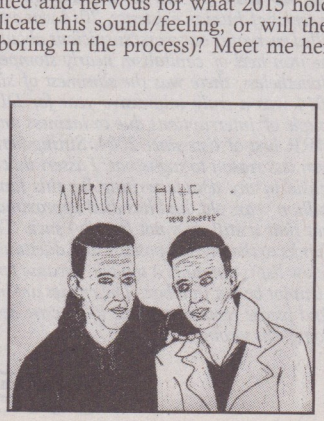
PIÑEN – *Aborto Sonoro* demo CS (self-released)
I suspect that this tape is the recording on my list that the fewest people have heard. This is a shame, because with *Aborto Sonoro* PIÑEN—a Barcelonan two-piece whose name means "skin dirt"—has thrown a hat into the ring in the battle for best hardcore band in Europe. This is no small feat, considering how much competition they have just from their own country-mates! Like fellow Spaniards FIRMEZA 10 or OTAN, PIÑEN plays raw anarcho-hardcore with inept guitar leads, breathlessly shouted vocals, and my favorite thing of all: slightly off-kilter D-beating. In other words, this is total Golnar-core.

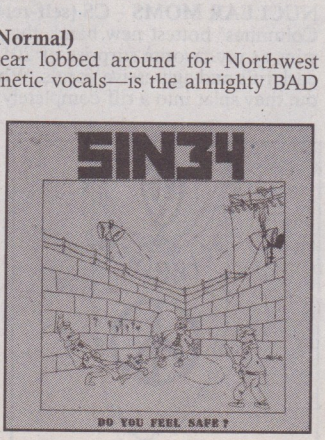
HYSTERICS – *Can't I Live?* 7" EP (M'lady's)
Like so many notable HC bands, Seattle's HYSTERICS recently called it quits at the height of their powers. *Can't I Live?,* their swansong, is a great record. To my mind, though, HYSTERICS is a band whose commanding live performance was their true signature. Every time I saw these ladies live, they made me thrash to their music…and then want to go start my own band. Over the years I have found that at its best, DIY hardcore punk can be genuinely inspiring; HYSTERICS has personified that inspiration for me these past few years. In our cynical, hipster-infected scene, they are already sorely missed.

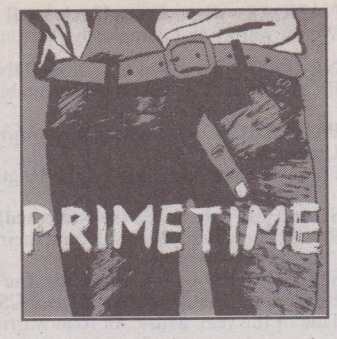
TRASH KIT – *Confidence* LP (Upset! The Rhythm)
SHOPPING – *Consumer Complaints* LP (M'ilk)
I don't say things like this often, so please take me seriously when I tell you that Rachel Aggs is a musical genius. The key link between these two (you guessed it) London bands, Aggs' guitar style is truly something that must be heard to be believed: complex yet tuneful DIY anti-chord virtuosity that never meanders into wankery, instead reminding us all that even into 2015 we all still firmly live in the post-punk era. To be sure, both TRASH KIT and SHOPPING are more than just Aggs' ample contributions—*Confidence* is more ecstatic celebration b/w moody reflection, while *Consumer Complaints'* vibe is more chatty and on edge. Still, the family resemblance is undeniable, and since both albums were kinda released in 2014—OK, OK, Shopping put out *Consumer Complaints* at the tail end of 2013—they make this list together.

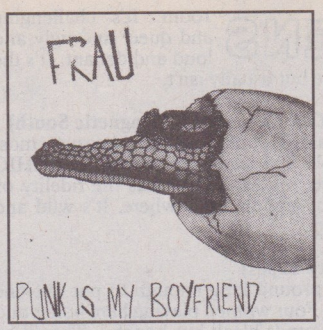
AMERICAN HATE – *Dead Squeeze* 7" EP (Not Normal)
Dead Squeeze, the debut EP from these Oklahomans, is pure hardcore. It is unfussy, venomously angry, and starkly to-the-point American thrash that hit me right in the gut the first time I heard it (and again and again every time since). Maybe it's cuz I live in New York City, where every HC band has some corny schtick, everyone has the right cool guy clothes, punks write for *Vice*, etc., or maybe it's the aftereffects of living through the tedium of the mysterious guy HC trend, but the truth is it's invigorating to hear a raging HC EP without any baggage, bullshit, or pretension. The lyrics hit all the right notes, featuring such classic punk (and life!) themes as self-doubt, the monotony of daily existence, and phonies. The vocals are furious. The riffs are colossal. The songwriting is stellar. The artwork is classic. Basically, if you are not a square, a poser, or a cop, you should get this record.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal)
The most common reference point I hear lobbed around for Northwest Indiana's BIG ZIT—particularly their frenetic vocals—is the almighty BAD









BRAINS. It seems to me, however, if you got this record expecting the musical proficiency, slick songwriting, or clean production values of BAD BRAINS you'd be completely mystified by what you got instead. Let me put it another way: you know how some old Italian bands—INDIGESTI in particular—thought that they were BAD BRAINS worship bands, but instead they just clobbered their instruments and shouted a million words a minute like they were hopped up on shitty speed? Well, this is like that. This band clearly loves BAD BRAINS (and DIY USHC in general), but instead of virtuoso jazz-fusion musicians, BIG ZIT is seemingly made up of some Midwestern maniacs and a demented baby on vocals.

PIECE WAR – *Apathy* 10" (Epic Sweep)
I almost feel bad putting this record on my best of list, because it barely exists. Pressed as a lathe cut with a comically small run—only 30 copies—*Apathy* is the debut record by New Zealand punk/pop prodigies PIECE WAR. Recalling NZ indie punk greats of the past, *Apathy* features eight tracks of fuzzed-out bedroom pop splendor, with the kind of songs that are perfect for new date mixtapes, getting over heartbreaks, setting fire to cop cars, or really anything in between.

SOME MORE TRULY KILLER RECORDS / MRR SHOULD REALLY LET THIS BE A TOP 30, THOSE FASCISTS: FRAU – *Punk is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock), PURA MANÍA – *Música Para Gente Fea* 7" EP (CVRecs), PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical* 7" EP (CVRecs), HERPES – side of split 7" EP w/ HUNTED DOWN (Goblin Shark / Recently Deceased), CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol* CS (self-released), NANDAS – demo CS (self-released), ORDEN MUNDIAL – *Obediencia Debida* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus), PERSPEX FLESH *Passing Through* LP (Static Shock), RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada / La Vida Es Un Mus), WANUY – *Muere* EP (CV Recs / Discos Huayno Amargo / Odio Los Discos), THE STOPS – demo CS (self-released), FAMILY OUTING – demo CS (IFB), SILENT ERA – demo CS (self-released)

REISSUES OF THE YEAR: SIN 34 – *Do You Feel Safe?* LP (Sinister Torch), BIKINI KILL – *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah* LP (Bikini Kill), TNT – *Complete Recordings* 2xLP (Static Age), CODE BMUS – *Strike Now!* 12" (Ever/Never), CRIME – *Murder By Guitar* LP (Superior Viaduct), NEO-PUNKZ & SUSPENSE 7" EPs (La Vida Es Un Mus), FRANTIX – *My Dad's a Fucking Alcoholic* LP (Alternative Tentacles), BOBBY SOXX – "Learn to Hate in the '80s/Scavenger of Death" 7" (Cheap Rewards), PLASTIX – *Konsumier Mich* 7" EP (Danger), CRISIS – *Kollectiv* 2xLP (La Vida Es Un Mus), MICHAEL PSYCHO – *Think* LP (S-S)

GREG HARVESTER

I didn't fall for a lot of LPs this year. Honestly, I've still been spinning the LOVE TRIANGLE LP from last year almost daily. I love the format, but with a few very notable exceptions (GOOD THROB, TERCER MUNDO, BIG CRUX, STREET EATERS and COPYCATS), I wasn't bowled over by the long players released in the calendar year of 2014. I was drawn to the shorter, more immediate blasts of punk that find themselves on tapes and EPs. Here they are.

SMALL RECORDS:

PRIMETIME – *Tied Down* 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
"Tied Down" might be the song of the year. Simple, matter-of-fact, to the point, no hyperbole, extremely catchy. "I want your body, not your mind / Don't wanna see you all the time / Let me spit into your face and you can spit back in mine." A source told me that this is the first band for most (?) of these four women and their first record ever is beyond superb. I can't wait to hear more.

IRON LUNG – *Savagery* 7" EP (Iron Lung)
I don't listen to other powerviolence bands. Even that label makes me cringe. IRON LUNG is perfect. Their songs, fittingly, remind me of surgeries: precise, well-studied, painful, machine-like and grim. "Passage blocked from swallowed towels forced down my fucking throat." They're like every negative feeling you can have stuffed into 30-second blasts. As always, the art is also top notch.

IN SCHOOL – *Praxis of Hate* EP (Kill Test)
I'm sorta sure that this one is on a few other lists…and for good reason. It's fucking excellent. Hardcore for the real hardcore.

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" 7" (Iron Lung)
I didn't go as gaga as everyone else I know about their LP, but this record is incredible. I don't know what the fuck they're doing most of the time, but they're doing it exactly right. Vicious, driving, inspiring, beautiful punk music made by 100% lifers. Also, they played the best live set I saw this year. Truly breathtaking.

FUTURE VIRGINS – "Late Republic/Centre" 7" (self-released)
I wasn't expecting this one. It came out with no fanfare, no promotion or warning. Just two quick songs on a record with hardly any info and they're two of my favorite songs I've heard from these guys in years. Perfect melodic punk from Chattanooga. Also, when's the last time you heard the word "harangue" in a song?

JACOB THE TERRIBLE – *Sings Songs Of It's Complicated* 7" EP (Corleone)
I had been waiting for this EP to come out for years (literally) and was not let down in the slightest. Jacob manages to fit ten pounds of words into five pound word-capacity songs, so you're stuck walking around town singing shit to yourself like "It's a cliché to say I would die for you, but I would kill for you / If you were sick, I think I'd sell myself on the street to buy pills for you." Also, top-notch punk is played by a backing band of fools who have been playing together for over 15 years. No wasted space on this record. "What I Love About You (I Hate About Myself)" is a certified anthem. Also, one of the most charismatic bands I've ever seen.

PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider)
"Oh, you like that shit, don't you? Bad taste. Shit liker."

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – "Gnats in the Pissa/Ghoul Breath" 7" (Total Punk)
"Gnats in the Pisser" is everything great about LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS distilled down into one song...plus a sax solo! It's my favorite song they've ever done. "Ghoul Breath" just sounds gross. How does a band manage to *sound gross?* It's an art. LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS are artists.

WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET? – *Beerstorm Trooper E.P.* 7" EP (Headcount)
I'm pretty sure these fucking fools would ridicule me for the low stud count on my jacket, but I still think they're great. Idiot music for idiot punks. This shit is completely over the top and ridiculous, but I can't get enough of it. "Punks stay decked."

FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock)
Every second of the music on this record is simply exploding off the vinyl. Everything is on the verge of falling apart at all times. I truly can't tell if the people in this band have been playing their instruments for five years or five minutes, but it doesn't fucking matter. Three unforgettable blasts of punk energy that is staggering, unrelenting and truly fucking chaotic. This is what I want punk to be.

ALSO WORTH IT: MYSTIC INANE, ANCIENT FILTH and OOZE.

TAPES:

THE CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol* & *Canadian Cone* CSs (self-released)
These northwestern Indiana freaks put out two tapes this year and it's basically the only thing I listen to, besides the other moments when I listen to the other stuff on this list. It's bouncy, frenetic, addictive and ragged. Every song has a definite hook and is super inspired. I'm excited for every new thing this band has to offer.

CONSTANT INSULT – demo CS (self-released)
Every member of this band is going off, playing incredibly tight, exciting melodic punk. What really get me though are the unstoppable, insanely catchy vocal melodies. Listen to "No Beginning" once and I dare you to get the tune out of your head for the rest of the day. Also, their drummer plays as if his snare drum is a cop's face…which means he's bashing the shit out of it.

SBSM – demo CS (self-released)
The thing I love about SBSM is that they're seemingly always on the verge of total collapse. Broken, fucked up synths compete with wildly flailing drums and shouts, taking up every inch of space in the

room. It's challenging and queer and ugly and loud and defiant. It's the things that punk always tries to be but usually isn't.

PSYCHIC BAOS – *Our Friends Call Us Horse* CS (Magnetic South)
I mostly stopped listening to garage punk years ago because most of it became so stale, predictable and slickly produced. PSYCHIC BAOS appeared in my life to reel me back in. It has the fidelity of a crackly AM radio station in the middle of nowhere. It's wild and unpredictable. It sounds like drugs.

INTERIOR 27 – CS (Commodity Tapes)
This Bay Area band was barely around long enough to put out one tape, but I'm really glad they did. Four women playing bare bones and instantly catchy post-punk that sounds bleak but hopeful. They'll be sorely missed.

VHS – *Vultures and Hungry Spirits* CS (Casino Trash)
Members of CRIMINAL CODE and BIG EYES put out this insanely catchy punk tape, taking cues from JAY REATARD and THE WIPERS, and injected with manic energy and inspiration. Cannot wait to hear more.

BABE QUEST – CS (self-released)
Two fierce women from Minneapolis got inspired during the sub-zero temperatures and turned out this badass tape full of unforgettable melodies that feels, to me, inspired by the RUNAWAYS and maybe even L7 (no shame)…I can't really do it justice in print, but listen to "The Wait," let it sink in and let your heart be won over.

FREAK VIBE – *Prostration* CS (Casino Trash)
I can't shake comparisons to the CRAMPS, but I can think of worse bands to be compared to. Loose, unhinged, wild rock'n'roll in the way that punks never play it anymore. A perfect tape. ugly music for ugly people.

TRRASH – *Demo '14* CS (self-released)
This is barely music, which is why I like it so much. I think I once said this sounds like someone throwing all the instruments down the stairs while a fucking maniac surfed atop the pile, gurgling with a microphone shoved down their throat. That is exactly what I want.

FISCAL CLIFF – demo CS (self-released)
This Bay Area band came and went and I didn't even notice until this tape went into my stereo. There's something very '80s sounding about it that I can't quite explain (think early LEMONHEADS, non-shitty late-'80s SST releases and early FLAT DUO JETS, but also, not really), but it's not retro in any way. A real big guitar sound (like a tube amp where the tubes haven't been changed since 1983) joined by a seriously punishing rhythm section and totally fucking catchy vocals. So fucking good and I wish I got to see them.

OTHER NOTABLES: CIVIL UNION, KNIGHTS TEMPLAR, HEY HALLWAYS, MYSTERIOUS SKIN, VIAL, TIMES BEACH, LONGINGS, SORROWS, RUZ and CAL AND THE CALORIES

JASON RYAN

This is my first year reviewing records and third year reviewing demos. I'm from NY and I now live in SF. I like everything from primitive American guitar, '50s jazz, '60s garage pop, '70s psyche doom, '80s new wave HC death punk rap, to '90s crust grind and black metal… I even like today's music.

DEMOS / TAPES (ALPHABETICAL):

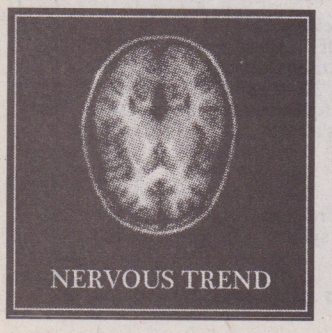
2084 – *Sign of the Cross* CS (Brainsand)
Most unique release I reviewed last year.

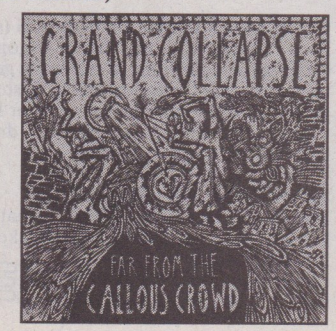
APRIORI – demo CS (self-released)
Music for garden zombies.

BAT – demo CS (Tankcrimes)
Nocturnal, addictive, vomitus thrash.

BLANK SPELL – demo CS (World Gone Mad)
Music for roof banshees.

BLAZING EYE – *East Coast Tour* CS (self released)





NANDAS – demo CS (self-released)
Weird, warbly and completely rigorous.

NECROT – *The Abyss* CS (Blood Divine)
From the best US crust-death metal band of 2014.

PADKAROSDA – *Szabadulásom Muvészete (Art Of My Liberation)* CS (Wake Up and Live)
For my darker side. This is a full-length tape.

SCALPED – demo CS (self-released)
Rawest fury from the Bay. Doing their own thing, hard.

STINKWARD – *It Is A Manner And A Custom That You Ask My Permission Before You Enter My Personal Space* CS (Brainsand)
Title of the year. Music for road warriors. Music for F.O.A.D. toads.

VINYL (ALPHABETICAL):

AHNA / CETASCEAN – split 12" (Doomed Society / Mercy of Slumber / Neanderthal-Stench / Phobia / Profane Existence / What Is Making Us Sick)
Winnipeg crusties crushing trendy hardcore with an epic bygone sound.

ALERTA ROJA – *Algo Esta Cambiando…Y Muy Violentamente* LP (Lengua Armada)
Collection of amazing post-punk from early '80s Argentina.

AZOTOBACTER – *Restrained Detained* 7" EP (Byllepest)
Strained urban crust that sounded very nostalgic to me. So, thank you.

FEMACOFFIN – *Dismal Twilight* 7" EP (Brainsand)
Heavy riffs, battle-scarred crust, beautiful art.

HAAPOJA – LP (Nerve Altar)
Brilliant Finnish band. Check this out—for Scandinavian punk and proficient grind fans. I'm not even one of those.

NERVOUS TREND – *Demo* 12" (1859 / Black Wire)
It just feels good.

NIGHTFELL – *The Living Ever Mourn* LP (Southern Lord)
This one grew on me like a black cloud. HC/death/doom from PDX, by two maestros of their respective genres.

NOMADS – *Holocaust Wall* 7" EP (h1n1)
A new dawn fades in LA, and it's fading cops.

GRAND COLLAPSE – *Far From the Callous Crowd* LP (1859)
Punk fucking rock.

SKAVEN – *Discography* LP (Skuld)
So wanted this to happen.

HONORABLE MENTION: ANTI-CIMEX – *Swedish Hardcore 1986-1993* 3xLP (Svart)
Because…ANTI-CIMEX boxset.

MAKING IT PUNK HAPPEN (ALPHABETICAL):

***ASSWIPE* #6.** Vanessa has a witty, uncensored, and engaging style of writing. It's simultaneously journalistic and off-the-cuff. Intimate and explosive. Awesome drawing style and layouts.

BASTARD NOISE / STYROFOAM SANCHEZ / OMNIVOROUS SCENSILLUM live at Life Changing Ministries. Giant tarantulas in suits. Styrofoam robots. Noise, ya bastid.

New York's Alright. INFERNÖH, INMATES, LIFECHAIN, ASPECTS OF WAR, Peculiar Pub, Acheron, ZYANOSE…"We're friends, beer, and punk!" Wildest weekend of the year for this old timer.

ZYANOSE U.S. tour in general. Brooklyn, SF, Oakland. This is how I like a live show to go. Every show louder than the other. Ballistic crowds, especially in Oakland.

ELEGY at 1-2-3-4 Go! Records. I don't know what to tell you, it was a quiet Sunday matinee, and then all of a sudden this band ripped through one of the best punk rock sets I saw all year. They were a piledriver!

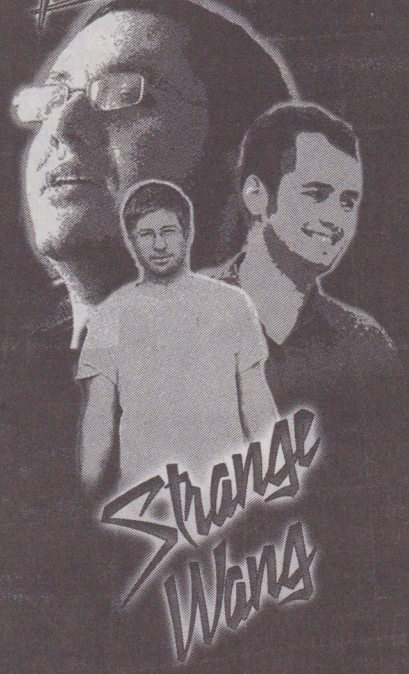
FLESH WORLD at The Knockout for a *MRR* benefit. CØNDITIØN gig was across the street… All punks spinning 'round night.

Martin Sorrondeguy performing spoken word at SF Public Library. One story from childhood, one story from a LOS CRUDOS European tour…Hilarious. Magical. Genius.

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

2014 TOP TENS

HOBO Bastard



Strange Wang

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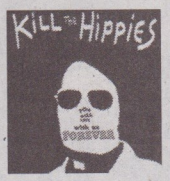

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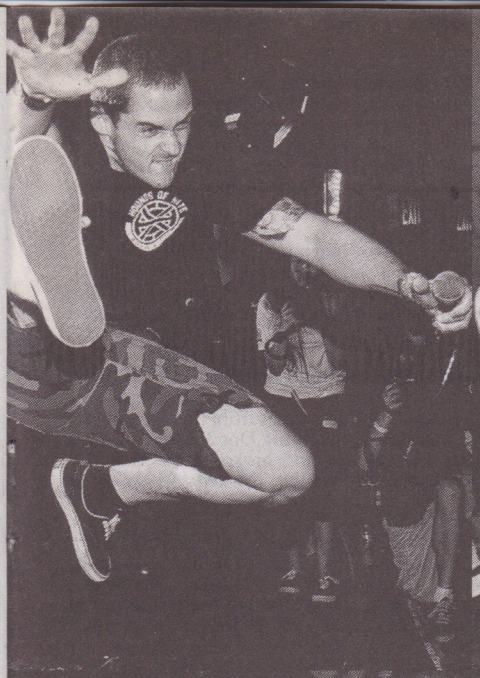
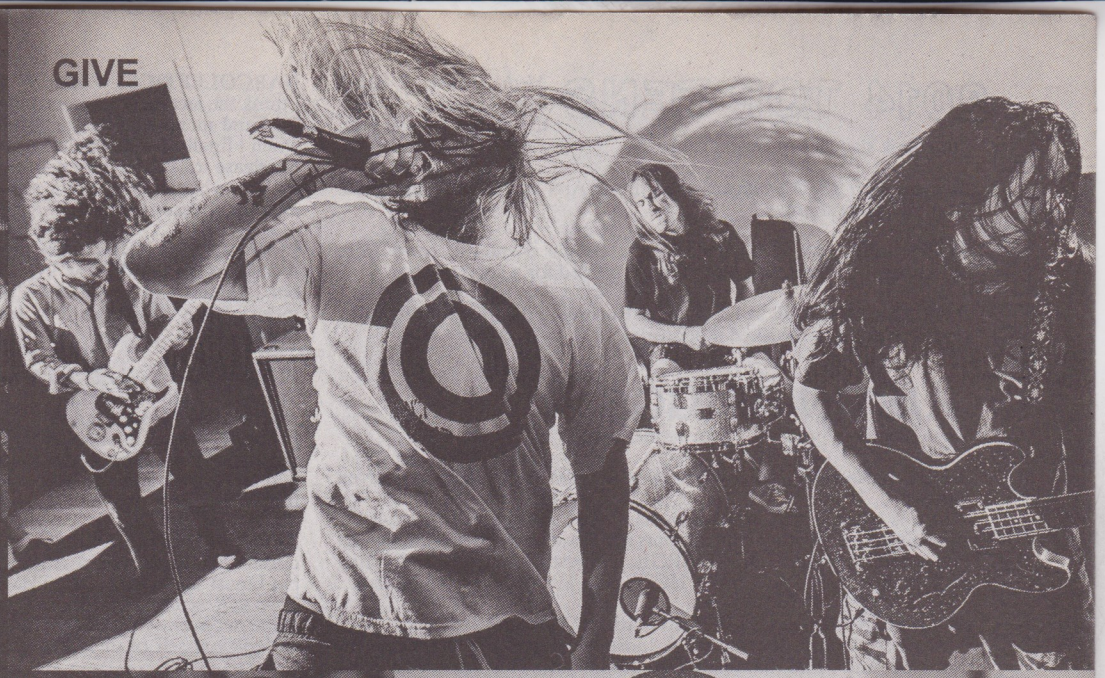


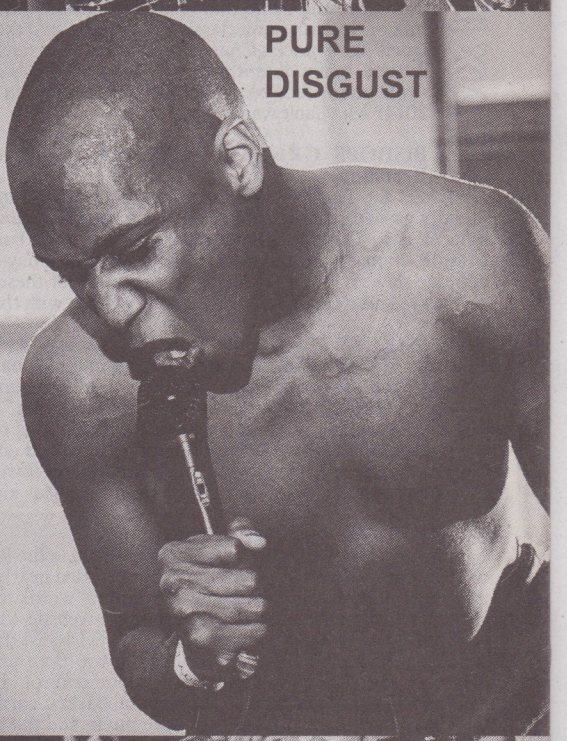
GIVE



EXIT ORDER

•PHOTOS BY ANGELA OWENS•

PURE DISGUST



CHAIN RANK

VIOLENT REACTION

2014 TOP TENS

***Meth Breath / Knull Void* zine.** Best drawings I saw all year. Notebook sketches of the macabre.

***Stepping Out: The Moonlighter* zine.** Eerie Arts by Jason Schulmerich. Minimal, only strange.

TONY MOLINA at El Rio. Had a couple friends in town from Winnipeg, this show was just what we needed for a good time.

RITUAL CONTROL at 1-2-3-4 Go! Records. First time with Rev Kev on guitar and they crushed it per usual.

JUSTIN BRIGGS

These things were what stuck with me the most this year.

AJAX – *Bleach For Breakfast* CS / 7" EP (self-released / Even Worse)
AJAX is what perfect, regular-ass hardcore sounds like. Bruised-brow thrashing, with just the right amounts of classically American, scowling HC mixed with some DISCHARGE, and just the slightest smattering of '90s streetpunk / shitpunk / HC like the TROUBLE or something.

AUSENCIA – demo CS (Silenzio Statico / Verdugo)
Somewhere I saw I saw the word "nostalgic" used as a descriptor for this band, and I find that really fitting somehow. This demo's excellent mix of Spanish punk classics of the '80s, and the Oi! / Skunk punk that labels like France's Chaos Productions were releasing at that same point in time, really does it for me. The vocal hooks of "Me Opongo" put a smile on my face every listen and help put it on my "top three songs of 2014" list. Can't wait for more!

BISHOPS GREEN – *Pressure* LP (Longshot / Pirates Press / Rebellion)
Pressure is the finest record made by skinheads (even though they don't all identify as such) since TEMPLARS dropped the *Phase II* LP in 1997. That's quite a gap. Their tough-but-sugary hooks do a bang-up job of signaling comfort in misery for the working-poor, fighting a day-in / day-out trench war of wage slavery. Not a shift goes by where one of these songs doesn't pop into my head. These Canadian vets fucking *nailed* it with this one.

BLAZING EYE – *No Outside* 7" EP (Overdose)
This record fires on all the same triggers of hard, nasty, sexy and muscular impulses that a lot of the early Japanese hardcore punk did, but I don't think it "sounds like GASMASK," or anything like that. BLAZING EYE is an all-out, dark-charging hardcore punk band that kills on record *and* live, with the members of the band expending more time and energy into making punk happen than practically anyone else I can think of. I will support whatever it is that they continue to do, *especially* if it is even *half* as kick-ass as this EP.

FATIGUE – demo CS (self-released)
I am nearly certain that there isn't anyone, even in the Bay, that thinks as highly of this demo / band as I do (even if I have missed nearly all their shows…oops) and that's fine. Instead of trying to use new words to say the same things I already said about it earlier in the year on my website, I'm just gonna cut'n'paste some of what I already said, which was…"[This is] the perfect soundtrack to watching the soul of real life bleached down to an unrecognizable, squeaky-clean, child-safety prison outside of your control. FATIGUE is growling, ripping and tearing back from the deepest, darkest corners of the gut. Take the ugly snarl and familiarity of first wave punk, add the blood-thirsty fervor and frostbite of a vacant Cass Corridor warehouse in 1982, and steady it with the gobbing, No-Future confidence of the UK punk sound of that same year, and you end up with a snarling beast similar to this…The savagery of "Outlander" being the standout track. Nasty."

GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse)
These fuckers could do no wrong (and they didn't…R.I.P.) There's no doubt in my mind that the GAS RAG records will even get better with time, and I'm equally certain that there will never be another new band better than them.

IMPALERS – *Psychedelic Snutskallar* 12" (540)
This record is Zeus throwing lightning, and we are old men playing golf in the storm.

NARCOLEPTICS – *Victims* 7" EP (Warthog Speak)
I think the fact that this record was sent to me unsolicited, I didn't know any of the band members personally, and it proceeded to completely blow my mind when I finally decided to listen to it two-or-so months later, to where I just *had* to release it, is enough to warrant a spot on this list. I just don't know how to tell you what an insane non-stop ass-whooping it really is. Best drumming on a hardcore record since *Is This My World?*

PERMANENT RUIN – *San Jose* 7" EP (Not Normal)
It saddens me that PERM RU is only on a semi-functioning basis these days, but I understand why (which also saddens me). The best people and the most intense, savage band of recent years. Always inspirational and always impressive.

PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical & Música Para Gente Fea* 7" EPs (CV)
These 7"s were a late edition to the list but their excellent mix of melody and muscle make for some great "Punk Basura." Nasty tunes from this Vancouver, BC band, sung in Spanish, with proper hooks, that bring Doc Martens, Chuck Taylors, vomit, brick walls, sweat, scabs, scars, and broken glass to mind, without ever sounding cheesy, predictable or familiar. Excited to hear more from them.

As has been my rule for the last several years, music recorded in a previous era doesn't qualify for the Year End list, whether it was issued in its time or not, but I must say that the DEATHWISH – *Tailgate* 12" (Disclaim) and the V/A – *Charred Remains* 2xLP (Radio Raheem) (re?)issues are two of the best things to come out in *any* era and demand a mention, and it's idiotic for you, the reader, to deny yourself of their pleasures.

THESE RECORDS WERE EQUALLY AS KILLER BUT SIMPLY DIDN'T GET AS MANY SPINS: BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal), BOSTON STRANGLER – *Fire* LP (self-released), KONTAMINAT – *Teamplayer* 7" EP (Lengua Armada), S.H.I.T. – *Collective Unconsciousness & Generation SHIT* 7" EPs (Iron Lung and Lengua Armada), WHITE WARDS – *Cigarette Burns* LP (Iron Lung), PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider) (sickest live band, though), and the weird-ass SLENDER demo.

JUSTIN DAVISSON

This year I got involved with the punk scene more than ever before. I met a lot *of great people who I've been able connect with on so many levels and who all kept me out of a social rut. Anyway, making this list had the "good problem" of there being too many great releases from so many different places and in so many different styles. Looking forward to more of this in 2015!*

THE ACHTUNGS – "Full of Hate/I Don't Wanna Talk About It" 7" (Total Punk)
Frustrated Finns make raw but easy-to-follow KBD punk. So direct and so from the (rotted) gut. Total Punk has gotta be my fave label of 2014. They get bonus points for using proto-corpse paint wearin' wrestler Kevin "Prince of Darkness" Sullivan on their t-shirts and flyers for their Fuck Off Fest.

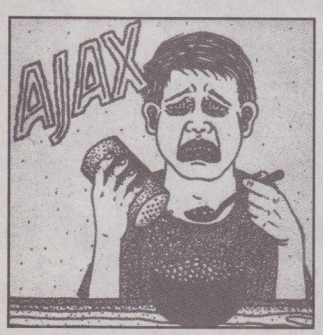
XETAS – "The Silence/The Knife" 7" (12XU)
Rhythmic and steady-as-hell Austin current punks/post-punks whadda ever ya call 'em. Great shouted vocals and wild guitar harmonics on the A-side and a killer fast number on the flip with "The Knife". This band *really* needs to play in the Bay.

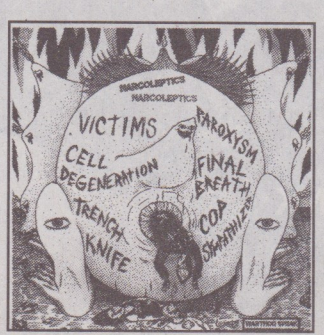
GOLDEN PELICANS – 12" (Total Punk)
Gnarly, shouted out, hard rawkin' slop that just rules supreme! Only thing remotely in their disco-demolished ballpark is LAUGHING HYENAS and that was forever ago. "Pissing in a Puddle of Puke" is pure "thinkpiece" repellent.

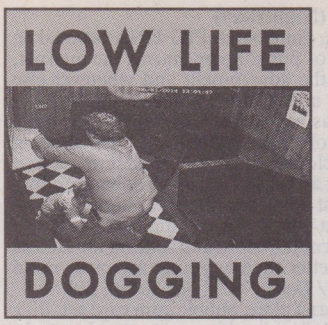
ORDEN MUNDIAL – *Obediencia Debida* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
I first heard this a month back at Thrillhouse Records and I was floored. Raging Majorcan hardcore from right now and damn—what an incredible live band!

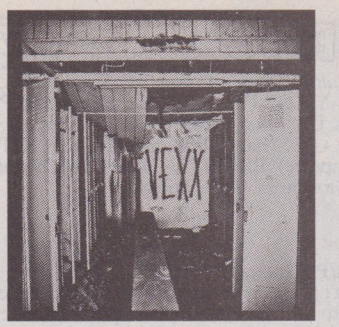
QUAALUDES – *Nothing New* 7" EP (Thrillhouse)
OK, I've seen them play shows a bunch but on vinyl they translate a killer live sound on every song. Even the little things like Aimee's vocals crossing over with guitarist/backing vocalist Morgan as well as how she extends phrases make this a gem. Not to forget the timeless punk sound on "I'm For Them."

ZEX – "Savage City/Buy or Die" 7" (Electric Assault)
Seriously great band from Ottawa that mixes '70s punk and NWOBHM seamlessly. And really, all three of their releases in 2014 had no bummer tracks whatsoever.









DEATHLESS BASTARDS / ELEGY – split LP (Symphony of Destruction)
Great charged up metal-punk from SF's ELEGY and some nice and dirty sounding "motörmetal" from France's DEATHLESS BASTARDS.

V/A – *Without Kibou There Is Nothing Vol. 2* 7" EP (Kibou)
A killer mix of right-now UK hardcore and punk that goes from DIS-WAR's crusty sound to DIJON MUSTARD's blend of REALLY RED and WIPERS over to AUTOPSY BOYS' super schizoid synth-punk. Plus a great closer by SECOND IN LINE that references both John Candy and Randy "Macho Man" Savage. I'm diggin' it the most!

AGENDA / MØRKT KAPITTEL – split 7" EP (Negative Vibe)
Two ultra-fast and explosive grindy, D-beat worshipping bands from Norway. AGENDA from Stavanger rips through things quite nicely. They even throw in a cover of the "Norskhardcore" classic, "Religøs Terror" by SVART FRAMTID. MØRKT KAPITTEL start off slow but do the (*ahem*) "epic crust" jams just right.

ZIG ZAGS – LP (In the Red)
Hard rockin' metal/punk/gonzo rawk heshers from L.A. that seem to go everywhere from the DICTATORS riffs to the MARKED MEN-type harmonies to underground '80s metal like MEDIEVAL (Michigan).

TEN FAVORITE NEW/NEW TO ME LOCAL BANDS: SCHLEIM, BAD DADDIES, THROWING ROCKS, APRIORI, OXYGEN DESTROYER, PINK PILE, SCRAPER, POOKIE & THE POODLEZ, PINK PILE, MUTANT CROSS

LAYLA GIBBON

I had a big crisis as to whether I should pick my ten most listened to records, or do the usual endless write up of ten EPs and LPs, then spent an epic amount of time freaking out about what to include / what to write about it, all totally fascinating contextual information I am sure. Punk rock is an endless vacation. Writing about music is turgid and wretched. I put a few things that woulda made my YETT last year if MRR *had gotten them before 2013 ended, and in that spirit I am going to mention the GG KING LP and the WITCHING WAVES LP which are reviewed in this issue, both technically came out in December, thusly missing the mark for full 2014 consideration / total and complete jammage throughout 2014, and thus will be entered into consideration for 2015 assuming we are not post-nuclear sewage by this time next year. I am also a terrible replicant human that recycled some of my record reviews from the magazine into this list format rather than coming up with more fascinating insights into aural technologies in the face of my useless and incapacitating woes. Alright!*

LONG PLAYERS:

NOTS – *We Are Nots* LP (Goner)
After two perfect 45s of URINALS/KLEENEX insurrection a nation of rabid fans wondered how a full-length was gonna transform our lives…Continuing onwards into the fluxus continuum with added nihilistic keyboards, it's a new future for rule breakers and drool makers everywhere. I think when I reviewed this I said it was like watching *Daisies* with ELECTRIC EELS as the soundtrack. In short, the recordings of my dreams. If I can't have what I want, I don't want anything…

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Was there a better record summing up this shoddy mindless existence in our blissful neo-liberal end times? Aggressive and antagonistic, idealistic / nihilistic, pinning up the microaggressions of the modern female experience to the inside of your eyelids like no other group. Like a musical version of Laura Oldfield Ford's incredible *Savage Messiah* fanzine, walking through the brutalist wreckage of post-Thatcher Britain littered with plastic bags and casual violence and somehow transforming it into a cut-up punk masterpiece…I've said it before, but any group that can somehow bring to mind NO TREND if they were on Crass Records with a front person that has the charisma and power of fucking "Girl on the Run" meets JOHN BRANNON gets to be the kings of punk.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
I found this an impossible record to write about, I agonized over my pathetic five line review for this very rag and in the spirit of that feeling I am going to replicate a couple lines from said review here: "'The Sound of Fear in the Western World,' *Vintage Violence*, Berlin ENO / motorik collisions with late-era BLITZ. This is a fucking classic, like reading Phillip K. Dick on a commuter train in end times capitalist reality, it feels nostalgic and current at the same time. Forever prescient, ironic, but also true enough that it stays with you through these tiresome times. For many reading this *Typical System* is not going to be 'punk' enough, whatever that means, but I can't stop listening to it. It feels both personal and subversive, romantic and dispassionate."

FLESH WORLD – 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
I think technically this came out in 2013, but its December release date meant we didn't get it until 2014 so it gets included! Urgent declarations of post-punk abandon from my current favorite San Francisco liberation force. Propulsive dark excursions which have an early Factory Records appeal, and are lit up by Jess' voice, which flits from a PYLON-like yelp to a perfect C86 SHOP ASSISTANTS lullaby…This record is so incredible, atmospheric and danceable, doomed and eternal. Soundtrack to the devolution of San Francisco.

VEXX – 12" (Grazer / M'lady's)
Best Oly band since WEIRD TV…Watching the singer perform is otherworldly, like some new Alice Bag / Isadora Duncan formation…Every aspect of VEXX is exactly right, like if the PATTI SMITH GROUP were on Dangerhouse, so tough and transcendent. That wild psyche/punk guitar sending shards of light direct from speakers into brains, and then there's the fucking rhythm section! Most incredible current punk drummer?! Cannot wait for the next installation of action and light…

EAST LINK – LP (In the Red)
The repetition and totality of sound employed by EASTLINK make all their records perfect for daily commutes, a 59 guitar orchestra with only one riff played eternally until the entire world mutates into a singular beat with dollar store CHROME guitar solos spurting out onto your fellow commuters when necessary for survival.

LOW LIFE – *Dogging* LP (RIP Society)
Debased ruminations on decay, lust, inaction over alternately deflated / thuggish post-punk dereliction. The lyrics are almost like a cartoon, a *Clockwork Orange / High Rise* take on the lives behind the headlines, what the "we're all going to the dogs" hand-wringing net-curtain twitchers think the maggot filled streets of modern life are teeming with… In musical form.

WATERY LOVE – *Decorative Feeding* LP (In the Red)
Further explorations into the impossibilities of Skull Music. VENOM P STINGER and SPIKE IN VAIN if they listened to BREAKDOWN in the *metaphorical* blender of a *literally* very useless writer. Why do skulls fall in love.

RAKTA – 12" (540 / Nada Nada Discos)
Almost everything anyone has written about RAKTA would make them seem to be something I would avoid; deathrock, tribal polyrhythms and yet…This record is so cool—it looks and sounds incredible, and watching this band destroy SF was one of the highlights of the year. In his *MRR* review of this record Ray Suburbia references Maya Deren, psychedelica, and girl driven deathrock incantations and I wholeheartedly concur. Layers upon layers build up to create a totality of sound, where most post-punk advocates investigate the sparseness of the genre, RAKTA veers away from that, creating an airless space out of dissonance and a complete wash of sound, wild vocals over doomed and danceable auralscapes. So sick!

EX-CULT – *Midnight Passenger* LP (Goner)
A stark attack, reflecting lean cruel times; a paranoid, skulking sound with a total speed-for-blood road movie feel; lyrics read like a dime store novel circa 1965, a noir-ish effect enhanced by their economical use of words, desolate landscapes and plummeting human experiences adding to the feel. The music is claustrophobic, with dense layers of guitars and rhythm creating a back to mono punk savagery. Relentless and swaggering, putting the punk back in the garage, this is a taut, high tension sound that mines from fifty different punk ideals.

RUNNERS UP:
HUMAN ABFALL – *Tanztee Von Unten* LP (Sounds of Subterrania), IVY – 12" (Katorga Works), TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintes Pepe), LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS

2014 TOP TENS

– *Collection* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / Space Ritual), BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – *Culture Demanufacturer* LP (Total Punk), NUN – LP (Aarght), JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numanica* LP (Beat Generation / La Vida Es Un Mus), SHOPPING – *Consumer Complaints* LP (Mïlk), FARANG – 12" (Bad Vibrations), TRASH KIT – *Confidence* LP (What's Your Rupture), PRIESTS – *Bodies and Control and Money and Power* 12" (Don Giovanni / Sister Polygon)

EPs and 45s:

PANG – *Young Professionals* 7" EP (Grazer)
I heard a rumor this record wasn't going to come out, as PANG broke up as all the good ones are wont to do… but the universe prevailed, the fans recoiled in horror and here it is, blowin' apart society as we know it. Or rather my brains and internal organs were reordered. I have waxed eternal about the genius sounds created by this group enough in these pages, but it's all true, their genius is eternal, and must be expounded upon! Picture MAGAZINE as all female group, ENO-obsessed art school types crafting perfect nerve-y pop at the snap of a finger. Or maybe picture four maniac WIRE fans destroying all art and culture in one 45. This is better than GIRLS AT OUR BEST!

NOTS – "Fix/Modern" 7" (Goner)
Further dada-punk destruction outta Memphis, NOTS will ruin you. More gassed in the garage than the first 45 but if you want total kicks, total action, a record that signifies that now is the time, or rather what now is next, then play this on repeat until it all falls into place! Fervent and furious.

SHEER MAG – *What You Want* 7" EP (Wilsuns RC)
How to write about a record that is indefinably great, that sounds like *good* classic rock, but is also scrappy and real like a basement punk band?! It's low down, mean and eternal, street smart, wild, desperate and assured… And what a voice! I keep thinking this is a power pop record, but not power pop in that vile *Power Pearls* wimpy milk shit manner, it's tough city street stomp, "All I do is sit and cry / Living in the city and I don't know why." Capturing the dirty summer in the city feeling; couldn't be anywhere but here, oh but I gotta leave right now or I'm gonna lose it. "Hard Loving" and "What You Want" are the scene stealers for me. Low fidelity end of the summer sounds for troublemakers and broken hearts everywhere. Gimme more.

MYSTIC INANE – *Deep Creep* 7" EP (Negative Jazz)
This features at least one ex-NECRO HIPPIE going off in a fried hardcore SACCHARINE TRUST vs. SPIKE IN VAIN wormhole, total tripper maniac sound! Both songs on the A-Side will have you doin' the creepy crawl round your room in an uncontrollable fashion, so classic and venomous and sick! Candice's guitar sound brings to mind so many of the greats, eerie and nihilistic and true, formed in a cave somewhere beneath the CRUCIFUCKS and RUDIMENTARY PENI. The vocalist has a death sneer like JACK BREWER meets MARK E. SMITH and even KEITH MORRIS...The rhythm section is tireless and doomed, and fuck, this record is great! The B-Side is like slowed down syrupy NEOS.

RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Nada Nada)
Continuing their penchant for creative expansion, avoiding cliché and aiming for the hypnotic over the predictable path…Transcendental, almost MALARIA! like sickness!

GIORGIO MURDERER – *Primitive World* 7" EP (Goner)
Post-apocalyptic synth-infused basement punk anthems for dislocated garbage brains, this sounds like it was recorded in 1983 by a maniac-minded miscreant with only dollar store synthesizers and garage sale guitars. All of the songs are insanely catchy *and* malevolent, and last approximately a minute each. Perfect! What more could you want? Nihilistic Oscar the Grouch destruction sounds. There's even a spoken word number for all you beatniks…

PIECE WAR – *Apathy* 10" (Epic Sweep)
This is a frustrating one to write about because it came out in an edition of thirty lathe cut only, I mean *thirty!* C'mon! And guess who didn't manage to get one. I have heard a US label is attempting a reissue so there is hope! Doomed New Zealand punk that I can't stop listening to, reminds me of GUN OUTFIT and the WIPERS, powerful and sincere, stark and beautiful. So fucking great.

PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider)
Apart from being the Bay Area's *only* living punk band, PIG DNA have taken it upon themselves to destroy the concepts of punk, noize, music, the internet, good art, bad art, insects, the patriarchy, the government and whatever else you got. Total incendiary sounds, formed in the furious underbelly of noize not music, but this grouping of humans has *personality*. They swiftly dispense of the problem many practicing this style of music suffer from, that of being a boring clone. The drumming is a manic cloud of fury and enchantment that the rest of the band build upon eloquently and destructively, feedback adding to the totality of experience rather than just being another weak signifier. The artwork and lyrics are further evidence that what is happening here should be studied, expounded upon and used to prevent boredom and settling for second best. The lyrics to the song "Fly" say it better than anything my puny mind could come up with *"Oh / You like that shit / Don't You? / Bad Taste / Shit liker."* I need a PIG DNA t-shirt, mouth guard, breast plate, bubble gum card set, flick knife etc etc. Watching them play is the coolest, but if you are not able to do that right now, buy this record instead and shut yourself in a windowless room and play it over and over and over. Nothing is real. America's only punk band, with the only record that came out in 2014.

PRIMETIME – *Tied Down* 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
If you feel unsure just listen to the title track over and over again and then it will all make sense. Sounds like they could have supported the SLITS but so much cooler and more hilarious than the DELTA 5 or AU PAIRS ever were.

DESTRUYE Y HUYE – *Oscura Sociedad* 7" EP (Verdugo Discos)
I was so psyched on this when I got it for review I immediately sent off for a copy of my own. Super sick rudimentary ULTIMO RESORTE style ragers from LA, the insert/lyric sheet poster looks like something that woulda come out with an LA punk band circa 1982, eternal and classic ruckus.

RUNNERS UP: PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical & Música Para Gente Fea* 7" EPS (CV), HYSTERICS – *Can I Live?* 7" EP (M'lady's), IN SCHOOL – *Praxis of Hate* 7" EP (Kill Test), BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal), OOZE – *Big Angry* 7" EP (Not Normal), LA MISMA– *Arete* 7" EP (Toxic State), DOWNTOWN BOYS – *Callate* 7" EP (Sister Polygon), LAS VENAS – *Vamos Por la Calle* 7" EP (Blondes Must Die), LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – "Gnats in the Pissa/Ghoul Breath" 7" (Total Punk), FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock), UNA BESTIA INCONTROLABLE- "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" 7" (Iron Lung)

SO MANY REISSUES, PUNK IS A NOSTALGIA PARADE: ELECTRIC EELS – all items!, OWEN MAERCKS – *Teenage Sex Therapist* LP (Feeding Tube), BIKINI KILL – *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah* LP (Bikini Kill), SLANT 6 – *Soda Pop*Rip Off* LP (Dischord), SIN 34 – *Do You Feel Safe?* LP? (Sinister Touch), BOBBY SOXX – "Learn to Hate in the '80s/Scavenger of Death" 7" (Cheap Rewards), MICHAEL PSYCHO – *Think* LP (S-S), C.O.M.A – *Klinik Organik Muzak Anatomik* LP (Desire), AUTISTIC BEHAVIOR – *Shattered Cattle* LP (SRA), CODE BMUS – *Strike Now!* 12" (Ever/Never), CURTIS SEALS / CHRISTIAN D'ORBIT – split 7" (Windian), CRIME – *Murder By Guitar* LP (Superior Viaduct), the SHIVVERS – LP (Sing Sing), PLASTIX – *Konsumier Mich* EP (Danger), X_X – *X Sticky Fingers X* LP (Ektro), DISHRAGS – LP (Supreme Echo), AMA-DOTS – LP (Rerun), SHOES THIS HIGH – *Straight to Hell* LP (Siltbreeze), CRISIS – *Kollectiv* 2xLP (La Vida Es Un Mus), REMA-REMA – "International Scale/Short Stories" 7" ((Inflammable Material), NEO PUNKZ – 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus), HUMAN ERROR – *Die* LP (Hard Art)

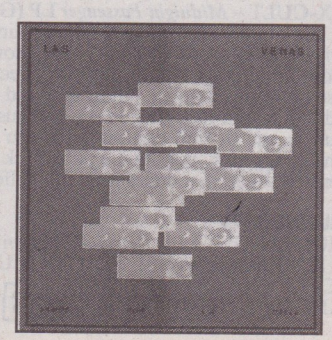
KILLER TAPES: CONEHEADS, PENNY MACHINE, FAMILY OUTING, VIAL, NANDAS, the STOPS, *Cool Bands* comp (especially CCTV), HAGFACE, TIMMY VULGAR, WET DRAG, SLENDER

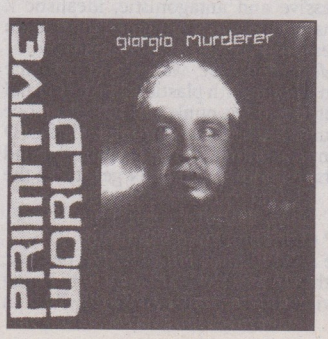
MATT BADENHOP

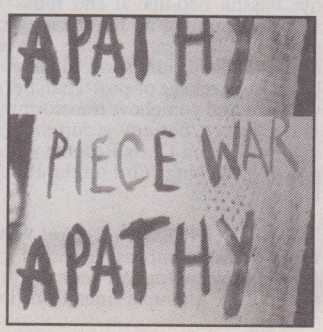
I actually had a hard time choosing ten releases this year. Rather than doing lists of reissues and demos I'll just focus on the ten releases that I played the most and that I believe will stand the test of time.

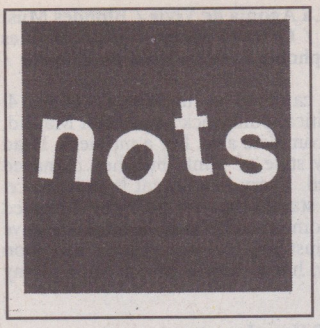
PANG – *Young Professionals* 7" EP (Grazer)
It's sort of unbelievable how good this EP is. The title track is probably the best song of the year, but once you get tired of playing it over and over again, you realize the other four songs are brilliant too. Sad—they apparently broke up the day I found out about them.

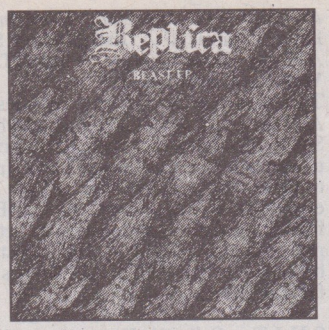
BLAZING EYE – *No Outside* 7" EP (Overdose)
The only current band that lives up to "the hype." Amazing and catchy weird

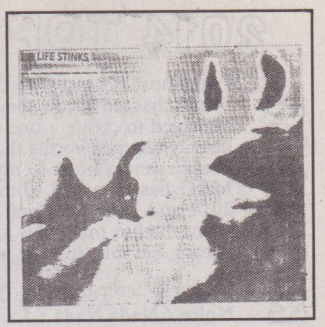












hardcore recalling all those '80s Japanese bands all the cool kids know about, but 100% relevant. Even more exciting live.

PADKAROSDA – *Szabadulásom Művészete* CS (Wake Up And Live)
I spent a sizeable portion of my creative energy this year releasing this brilliant album by this unique Hungarian group and trying to convince as many people as possible that PADKAROSDA is one of the best punk bands in the world right now. Those who gave it the time of day were immediately convinced. Everyone else—you fucked up the first time around, but there's still time!

NAPALM A.D. – 12" (Skrammel)
As long as bands keep rehashing the same old crap, I will continue to snooze through it. As long as folks from TOTALITÄR keep doing crushing Swedish hardcore projects, I'll be losing my mind over them.

LA MISMA – *Arete* 7" EP
I knew this would be among the ranks even at the beginning of the year when it came out. Especially after they came to the West Coast and ruled both times I saw them.

DAMAGES – *Reality Disease* 7" EP (Damaging Noise)
I think this one flew under the radar for most. Too bad, because Santa Ana's DAMAGES balances power and melody, with no shortage of snarl and hooks.

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nostros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe)
Mexico City seems to be a hotbed for interesting and inspiring punk right now. This is classic Mexican hardcore punk at its root, but evolved and relevant to the modern era.

CARNE – 12" (La Corporacion / Sociedad Fonográfica Subterraneo)
Total surprise here. I brought this home from Spain a little over a month ago and have already listened to it more than several of the records on this list. CARNE features two of the masterminds behind LA URSS, which I knew I'd be thankful for. Amazing songwriting and a beautiful vocal delivery. Flip it over and over and over and over and...

REPLICA – *Beast* 7" EP (Prank)
No surprise here. I've pretty much given up on modern hardcore for reasons I won't go into right now. Most folks have become acquainted with this band's material by now, but in case you haven't, you need it all. REPLICA forever.

JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numanica* LP (Beat Generation / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Most fun LP of the year for living room dancing. Soooooo catchy!

MITCH CARDWELL

TEENGENERATE – *Get Action!!* 2xDVD (King)
V/A – *I Don't Like Sex* CD (King)
Two decades of TEENGENERATE is cause for celebration, and that spirit is mightily captured with these two releases. *Get Action!!* is a fan's dream-come-true: a documentary focusing on the band's origin and legend, delivered in a surprisingly touching and incredibly inspiring way. The bonus materials, complete with *tons* of live footage, only sweeten the deal. Really quite exceptional! The *I Don't Like Sex* compilation was released to accompany the film and features a whole slew of bands related via lineage or inspiration, including RAYDIOS, FRANTIC STUFFS, FIRESTARTER, ROCKBOTTOM, and, most surprisingly, THE DEVIL DOGS, whose unearthed original demo of "My GTO" is the historical stand-out here.

ROSS JOHNSON & JEFFREY EVANS – *Vanity Session* LP (Spacecase)
Late-nite rock'n'roll poetics, jam-packed with wisdom and truth. This year's loose-goose golden platter, no joke.

PANG – *Young Professionals* 7" EP (Grazer)
Every year needs a perfect 7" single. Pang delivered for 2014. Truly exceptional. RIP.

ICKY BOYFRIENDS – *Live In San Francisco* LP (Castle Face)
I was there, maaaaaaan, and lemme tell ya, it was pure vitriol and inspiration.

APACHE DROPOUT – *Heavy Window* LP (Magnetic South)
This Indiana outfit pulls from only the strongest sources to craft a heady brew of homemade garage punk. Mind = pickled. Hips = swiveled.

V/A – *Live in Void* CD (Dialogue)
MIDDLE EDGE, DIALS and TVTV, all caught live. Very icy stuff and a perfect starter-kit to get a handle on what's rocking Japan circa now.

LIFE STINKS – "Portraits/Sweep It Under the Rug" 7" (Total Punk)
A fine swan-song to their two-drummer days. Newer material points toward another amazing LP in 2015.

THE BLACK AND WHITE – *You Make Me Sick* CS (Beastly Cad)
Spiked-out chop/slice/dice punk from Japan. Was lucky to catch them live and they completely ruled. More Black And White ASAP!

NO BAILS – *Epyx Shredder* LP (Pelican Pow Wow)
This year's moron/genius gut-bomb.

ALSO TOP NOTCH: TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung), HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS – *Stay Home!!* LP (Toxic State), CHEATER SLICKS – *Live Vol. 3* LP (Columbus Discount), PLEASURE GALLOWS – CS (self-released), THE C-3'S – *Wild Wind* 7" EP (self-released), HATEMAN 7" (Pop'n'Roll), GORILLA – "Mary Anne/Forever" 7" (Three Dimensional), DIALS – "School Girl/Nervous" 7" (Secret Mission / Mangrove), BOYS ORDER – "Tomorrow Dancing/Danger" 7" (Secret Mission), WATERY LOVE – "Sick People/I Don't Care" 7" (In The Red), and all I heard by NOTS, GOLDEN PELICANS, MANATEEES, BUCK BILOXI and EX-CULT.

OSCAR GUTIERREZ

Punk was one of few things that really kept me afloat this year. It seemed as though shit was really doomed with issues of social justice, specifically with the war on folks of color, trans and queer folks, and other marginalized communities. I have never been so sure in the power of narratives through art and music and amongst the mindless punk that I love so dearly and the shock rock that makes my head hurt, there has definitely been some type of hope that punk continues to be an avenue for folks to channel their frustration. It has been wonderful seeing all the folks that have and continue to put mad work into punk. As always, to say that 10 albums were significant to me during all of 2014 would be an understatement. The punx really hit hard this year and I am excited to see what is coming for 2015. Major shout out to all the punx out in LA that are doing some really cool work, and to all the folks of color, women, trans and queer folk, and youth that continually build punk; this is your shit and fuck whoever says otherwise.

De mi barrio, a tu barrio, Gracias un chingo!

Now, in no particular order…

DESTRUYE Y HUYE – *Oscura Sociedad* 7" EP (Verdugo)
I was certain this would make it on to the list before it was released. In fact, I was sure of this when the first demo was released. DESTRUYE Y HUYE has, hands down, taken the sound of Los Angeles punk to a whole different level. As hesitant as I might have been of the reissue of the "Oscura Sociedad" track originally on their demo tape, DESTRUYE Y HUYE has thrown this record down harder, angrier, and wholeheartedly well thought-out. The track "Sera Un Genocidio" jolted me right off of my chair instantly into a daily dance routine. Unfortunately, DESTRUYE Y HUYE gave their farewell in December of 2014 after their record release. New projects are already underway for these girls and I am ecstatic.

CRIMEN – *El Problema Eres Tu* LP (Discos Enfermos) and CS (Discos MMM)
Mexico City's CRIMEN is by far one of my favorite bands of 2014. I was thrilled knowing their new LP would be out in 2014, and especially with the idea that I could get my hands on it at the NYC Latino Punk Fest. However, the complications with the label releasing the LP (where the label was in no way responsible) were irking me and I had given up on the idea the Bandcamp tracks would ever have a physical form. Discos MMM saved the day and released a cassette never to leave my tape deck. This nine-track cassette is guaranteed to make you convulse in fury. *El Problema Eres Tu* is a well-executed soundtrack to your violent days and there is no need to stop this at 2015. CRIMEN is another band that left us in 2014, but this is definitely one of the best products of a farewell I have ever seen.

2014 TOP TENS

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

SHEER MAG – *What You Want* 7" EP (Wilsuns RC)
I'm almost at a loss for words on this one. The guitar melody followed by the charged vocals spew out an amazing sound. SHEER MAG has managed to create a one of a kind record never to be forgotten. The heavily charged vocals that carry the "AYAYAYAYYEAH" on Point Breeze were a hook to my instant obsession with this band. SHEER MAG has managed to make a soulful punk rock sound possible in 2014 and they are doing it successfully and flawlessly. Surprisingly, I have had to make this argument before, but this is really not up for debate. Let this shit rule your life already.

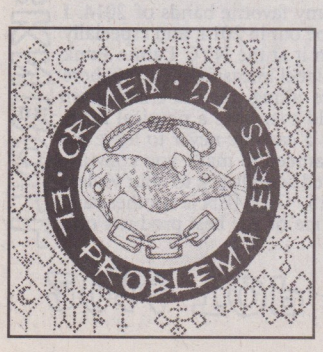
RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Let's review one thing I did wrong in my Top 10 last year: RAKTA was not part of it. I'm redeeming myself this time around by putting this EP on here, but this is not the sole purpose this record is on here. RAKTA definitely did not disappoint after the release of their full length. Let's address "Serpente," one of two songs on this record and the song that had me instantly hooked. The gloomy and steady drumbeat with reverbed vocals make for a perfect combination, guaranteed to make anyone instantly hypnotized subscribe to their weirdo beats. Brazil's RAKTA is a force not to be reckoned with. Bigger question here is, did you see them on their North American and European tour and if not, why?

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe)
I wish I knew about this band earlier, but I definitely caught them at the perfect time. Mexico's TERCER MUNDO hits extremely hard with this record, which could potentially be the soundtrack to scenes of a slow apocalypse, such as the one we are currently living in. They took the elements of ruthless hardcore punk and mixed them in with lyrics set to captivate an almost self-destructing social reality. Dave's distorted vocals and heavy bass riffs are here to make anybody question their well-being. TERCER MUNDO in the flesh is really just as fucking crazy as this record put it out to be. Beware.

PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical & Música Para Gente Fea* 7" EPs (CV)
There were a couple of things that made my trip to NYC for Latino Punk Fest worth it. Let's skip the rest of the senseless details of that trip and skip forward to PURA MANÍA. I had picked up their demo tape and knew they were good, but these EPs really take it to another level. Vancouver BC's PURA MANÍA would be slightly comparable to BLITZ, but could potentially give that extra push. Every song on each of these records makes me feel particularly blessed to understand Spanish, but also blessed to have some rhythm in my dance. I continued to go back to the PURA MANÍA merchandise table after their amazing performance hit during the peak of me being poor in NYC. I bought everything, and as you can see, it was completely worth it. PURA MANÍA should forever stay relevant; there are no options here.

JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numancia* LP (Beat Generation / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Oh, what a pleasure it is to be able to review a JUANITA Y LOS FEOS release. If you can understand my deep obsession with ALASKA Y LOS PEGAMOIDES, then you can really understand my obsession with JUANITA Y LOS FEOS. However, to compare the two would barely begin to describe this style. JUANITA Y LOS FEOS manages to create a record that takes from the Spanish pioneers of early punk rock and mends it with modern styles and riffs. This is one of those albums I really sat with and processed, mostly because the reality is that people don't make music like this anymore. It's still punk, it's getting the dance tracks right and the vocals, oh my, the vocals. I'm so obsessed with this band, and I can definitely say it played a major part in my 2014.

EKOLALIA – *Si Lo Ke Kieren Es Una Guerra* 7" EP (Verdugo)
Okay, so this is a demo tape turned vinyl release and I am very grateful that Verdugo Discos took the initiative. Yeah, EKOLALIA is ¾ of GENERACION SUICIDA, but trust me when I say it's totally different. I played this record over and over and for a moment it played in my head while I was out of the house. I never thought EKOLALIA got the hype it totally deserved, seeing as the demo tape really hit hard for me. This band stays raw with the music and is continually serving down in LA. I'm waiting on a new release (most likely to be on my 2015 Top 10) and a tour from these guys, but only time will tell. I am taking this one with me 2015-death. EKOLALIA, you guys are doing it so well.



ACCIDENTE – *Amistad Y Rebelión* LP (La Agonía de Vivir / Blondes Must Die / Contraszt! / Distribuidora Soroll / Grita O Muere / Halo of Flies / In My Heart Empire / Pifia / Tranzophobia / Veganismo Es Respeto / Walking Is Still Honest)
This was one of the first releases that came to us in January of 2014. ACCIDENTE is an incredibly catchy political punk rock band from Madrid, Spain. The release of their LP left me in complete awe. For a moment, I had to reconsider that this was totally not my style of punk, but they managed to execute it in a way that had me hooked. Every instrument is in its place, every lyric is on point and ACCIDENTE started the year off right. I bugged friends on their way to Spain to get me some merchandise because we have not been blessed with a West Coast tour just yet. However, I hope this soon becomes reality. ACCIDENTE has easily, hands down, become one of my favorite bands.

S.H.I.T. – *Collective Unconsciousness* 7" EP (Iron Lung)
This is about five minutes of some of the most fucked up hardcore punk coming straight out of Toronto. S.H.I.T was guaranteed a place on this Top 10 immediately following my introduction to this record. S.H.I.T is not for the easily offended and this record definitely shows that. However, to say that S.H.I.T. has ever released anything that was not superb would be a total lie. This band is always on point and I hope they continue producing more songs to get pissed off to in 2015.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: STRANGERS – demo CS (Silenzio Statico), LEATHER DADDY – *Sob Story* CS (Twerp Records), INSTITUTE – *Giddy Boys* 7" EP (Katorga Works), AUSENCIA – demo CS (Verdugo), FUMIGADOS – demo CS (self-released), KONTAMINAT – *Teamplayer* 7" EP (Lengua Armada), COLONIA *S/T* (Trends Die Records), IVY – LP (Katorga Works), BLAZING EYE – *NYA* CS (self-released), GENERACION SUICIDA – *Todo Termina LP* (Doomtown / Going Underground / Symphony of Destruction / Trabuc), SADICOS – *Manic Relapse* CS (self-released), CRIMEN – *Discography for NYCLPF* CS (self-released), QLOAQA LETAL – *Nunca, Siempre* LP (Metadona)

PAUL LUCICH

Best fashion interview this year goes to Distort *zine by way of CONSTANT MONGREL…and not just because that interview coins the term "Apartmento Punks." Best live show goes to new wave rager RICHARD PINHAS…To quote Canadian acoustic Oi! sensation JENNY WOO: "You are a whisper, (Richard Pinhas) is thunder."*

TRASH KIT – *Confidence* LP (Upset the Rhythm)
That SHOPPING record was killer. This has "members of" and is also killer. Noodly guitar licks that sound scientists say share the DNA of whoever played guitar on BENT OUTTA SHAPE's "Stray Dog Town" but like less New York and more free wheelingly Brighton…and more RAINCOATS etc. English coastal chill wave for discriminating punks who appreciate the finest in sound.

HIRED GOONS – *Demo II* CS (self-released)
Oi! Pre *Triumph of Life*-era FUCKED UP takes up musical congress with the syrup soaked (deep and gravelly off that lean and lager) vo-killz of the BELTONES. When you acquire this you will have the pleasure of hearing the truest contemporary Canadian Oi! sounds. It's powerful *and* has some of the atypical melodic flourishes that are characteristic of French Oi! Later pressed to LP by Lionheart, along with *Demo I.*

BLIND AUTHORITY – *No Future* 7" EP (Self Acceptance)
Perfect music to sculpt your "bod" to. Works well for interpretive dance and lifting weights…but I haven't field-tested it for other physical activities.

NUN – LP (AARGHT)
A new wave kaleidoscope of dystopian dream world images from the fourth dimension. Radiophonic music for a robot fashion show.

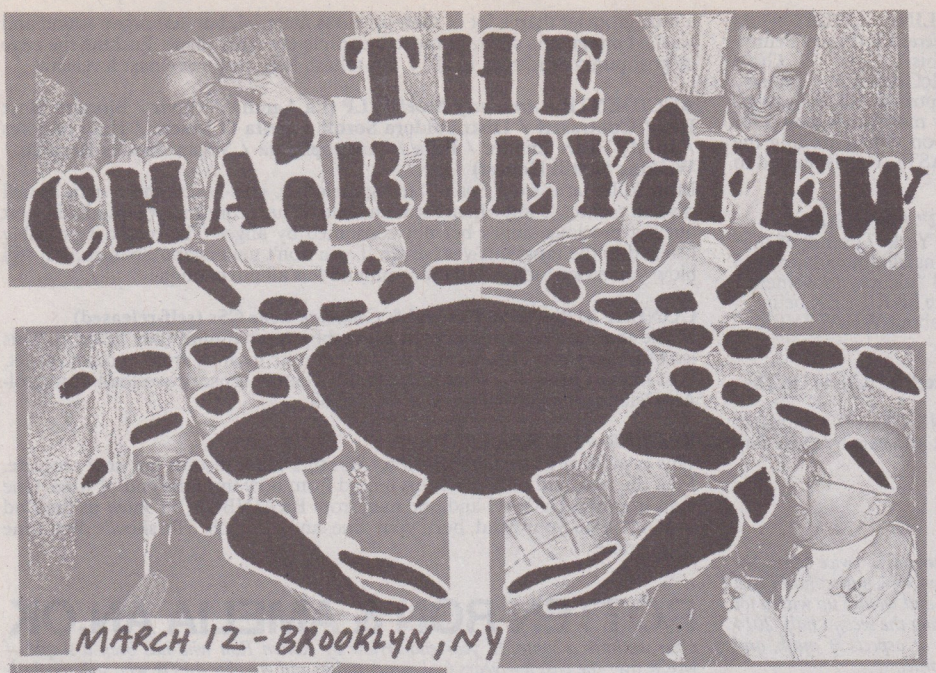
TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
This record has the ability to move people…cue the MOTELS; "I'd sell my soul for TOTAL CONTROL…" For me "cooking" means unwrapping Cliff bars or putting a steak on a grill. I don't have skills. The more things I add to a recipe the more chance I have of messing it up. TOTAL CONTROL keeps adding things to their recipe and it only gets better. In the same way I can't, but Brooks Headley can make Fancy Desserts, these guys can make fancy records.

PANG – *Young Professionals* 7" EP (Grazer)
PANG uncovered a new brand of bizarre pop counterculture hits that sounds both familiar and freshly first found. In the pantheon of talented East Bay artists they're right up there with TOO SHORT… Super good. One of my old bands used to share a practice space with them. Sometimes when I want to feel holy or when in the mood to cruise a daytime reverie, I go back and stare at the building.

THE FLEX – *Flexual Healing 3: T.H.E. F.L.E.X.* CS (self-released)
Noisey buzzing Oi! that's conceptually way solid but falls just short of being "classic" because this could so obvz have been released on a *flexi*… punks born in braces with their backs 2 tha wall fighting 4 survi-val.

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
2014 TOP TENS

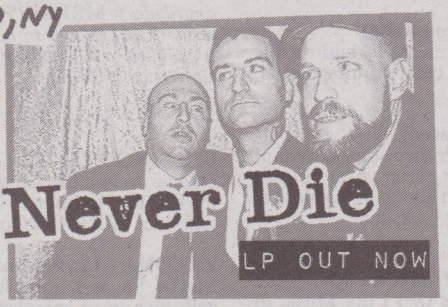
THE CHARLEY FEW



MARCH 12 - BROOKLYN, NY
MARCH 13 - LONG ISLAND, NY
MARCH 14 - BALTIMORE, MD
MARCH 15 - McLEAN, VA

Punk Fire Never Die

THE CHARLEY FEW.BANDCAMP.COM



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iN tHiS mEsS

New music from
Jack Dalrymple
(One Man Army, Swingin' Utters, Dead To Me)
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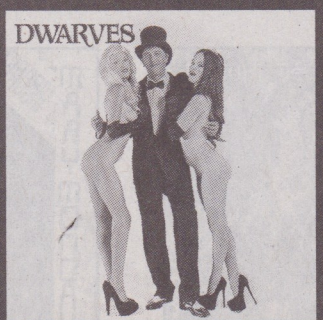

GENTLEMAN BLAG

Limited one time pressing!
New 4 song 7" from The Dwarves
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FAT WRECK CHORDS

2014 TOP TENS

ELINE COUT – *13 Pieces* LP (Pretty Penny)
This is Greer McGettrick's noisey post-MALLARD devotional to Bruce Gilbert's post-WIRE endeavors. Bruce Gilbert as a musical muse = inadvertently more punk than u (or me—but not more punk than Raymond Pettibon twitter trolling the comments for his Supreme video on HYPEBEAST). This is limited to 100 copies.

WHATEVER BRAINS – *SSR 63 / SSR 64* 2x12" (Sorry State)
New wave post industrialist swagger in the New York '77 sense of the word "swagger" and not in the ubiquitous post Instagram banal played out sense. "Trill" in pre-coopted original BUN B "identity movement" sense of "Trill"…with some leads that sound like SKRILLEX being accosted by ALAN VEGA…what's not to love about WHATEVER BRAINS?

BRIDGE COLLAPSE – "Wilderness/Blockbreaker" 7" (Crime On The Moon)
2/3 GRASS WIDOW (bass/guitar) + 1/3 RANK XEROX (drums) = BRIDGE COLLAPSE = a seizure of your heart and ears by these Bay Area mod punk visionaries.

RAY SUBURBIA

2014 was pretty tumultuous year for me. I moved four times, twice across the Bay, once across the country. I was exposed to a lot more new music than I had been in a long time during the first half of the year—and wound up with a lot of free time to really dedicate to listening to it all during the second half. 2014 reminded me about the absolute best and worst parts of aspects of punk, and here's the Top 10 soundtrack to that, in no particular order.

THE LOWEST FORM – *Negative Ecstasy* LP (Iron Lung)
Scummy, fuzzy, pissed off hardcore. Music that melts my brain while I try to scrape the skin from my bones. Nothing chill, nothing casual, nothing nice.

VIOLENCE CREEPS – *Demo & Demo 2* CSs (self-released)
One of the best Bay Area bands. Ever. Creepy crawly, grimey slimey, mutant moshing, post-punk but not "post-punk." Not cool, not clever. Arty but not farty. Dumb but not stupid. Tension and perversion. Pain and gain. Explosive. Very Explosive. "Everybody says 'fuck you!' But nobody fucks me!"

CAVE STATE – *Phase One* 7" EP (To Live A Lie)
Perfect powerviolence. Eleven songs in eight and a half minutes. Makes me want to punch everything I don't like, and some things that I do. Music to hate by.

JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numancia* LP (Beat Generation / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Kinda spooky, kinda poppy Spanish post-punk with some of the best hooks and vocals I've heard in a *very* long time. There's a song for every mood you could every possibly be in. One of those rare albums where every song is great, in the right place, and nothing seems to be filler whatsoever. Dark grooves for the coming social collapse.

PINK PILE – demo CS (self-released)
Another amazing band from the Bay. Sloppy songs about sloppy subjects. Music that sounds like a worn-out hoodie held together with patches and safety pins. Everything falling apart, but only in all the cool and right places. When I think about East Bay punk, this is exactly the kind of stuff that pops into my mind. Music for people who hang out all day at the public library cause it's got air conditioning, internet, movies and books—all for free.

PRAISE – *Lights Went Out* LP (React!)
Super tight, badass riffs, strong vocals, great production. Everything about "classic" hardcore, but with a modern twist and production punch. Nothing fancy or groundbreaking here, just solid as fuck hardcore. This is the kind of stuff you give to a fourteen-year-old to get them into DIY punk for life. If I can catch them live you will catch me finger pointing and piling on. There really need to be more bands as good as PRAISE in 2015.

RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada / La Vida Es Un Mus)
One of the best bands around. These Brazilian bruxas keep the ethereal spook coming strong. Two songs with perfectly crafted atmosphere. The A-side gets a little groovier than a lot of their previous material, but that organ sound and washed out guitars still take me to a completely other plane. Pushing the edge of post-punk/deathrock in 2014. No rehash here, just more next level shit.

ACCIDENTE – *Amistad y Rebelión* LP (La Agonía de Vivir / Blondes Must Die / Contraszt! / Distribuidora Soroll / Grita O Muere / Halo of Flies / In My Heart Empire / Pifia / Tranzophobia / Veganismo Es Respeto / Walking Is Still Honest)
More killer jams from Spain! Strong melodies, posi-lyrics, and a tight as hell rhythm section. Somewhere between melodic hardcore and pop-punk. Earnest but not precious, angry but not consumed by anger. The record I probably listened to the most this year. Even if you don't understand Spanish, it'll still blow you away. I really can't recommend this album enough.

CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol* & *Canadian Cone* CSs (self-released)
Music that no one could ever imagine they wanted until they heard it. This isn't for everyone. This isn't for anyone. Frantic insanity from another planet. Post-human punk. The soundtrack for 21st century sensory overload. Conetrol-Alt-Deleting the past 40 years of rock'n'roll.

REGLER – 12" (8mm)
This is punk at its final conclusion. All other punk records are now obsolete. Melt them all and only press this record from now until the end of time. One man from BILLY BAO and one man from BRAINBOMBS show us the End of Punk. Quit your band, burn your zine, and get a job. The show's over. time to go home.

ROTTEN RON & AMELIA AN.OK

Here we have a compiled year end review by Rotten Ron who has been a staple of MRR *over the past few years (reviews & radio) and Amelia An.Ok who still regularly contributes to* MRR *and* Pork *magazines. Both love MOTORHEAD, motorcycles, cats and GG ALLIN and are head over heels for PIG DNA and MARY MONDAY. Neither is qualified to do a top ten except for their love of punk. So bite it, you scum—here's our version of 2014.*

♠ROTTEN RON♠

BLAZING EYE – *East Coast Tour* CS (self-released)
One of *the* best live bands right now. All fireworks and bondage masks. This is the best tape to listen to at 5am before you go to work. Get on your motorcycle and ride. VRRRRRROooom, I WILL KILL YOU!

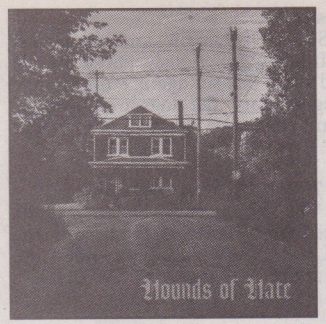
PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider)
Maybe the last hope for Bay Area punk. Like a well-greased fist to the collective ass of complacent punks here. They're adorable, too. The mysterious Nightrider Records' best release yet (I've only heard two). If they made a sequel to *Cruising* this would be on the soundtrack.

MARY MONDAY AND THE BITCHES – "I Gave My Punk Jacket To Rickie/Popgun" 7" (HoZac)
I want Mary Monday to be my mom. I want her to be the mom that has non consensual sex with me. I know this is a reissue but it's a vital piece of San Francisco punk history and it rocks. Seriously. Do it Mary.

WARTHOG – *Prison* 7" EP (Iron Lung)
Recorded in 2012 but out this year. Their first was great but this owns it. They were a bit of a letdown live. To their credit, my expectations were crazy high. I saw them at a record store so how wild can you get? "Feral" is like a personal anthem.

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – *Collection* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / Space Ritual)
I refused to pay any attention to this band because their name reminded me of lame arts and crafts punks sporting homemade sustainable macramé buttflaps and drinking Pabst. Wrong. This is some seriously nihilistic brat-core made by grown men with a singer who's the spawn of Doc Dart. I don't even own this. I listen to a shitty mp3. It's that good.

ISOTOPE – *Final Wind of Mercy* CS (self-released)
What is D-beat? Is that like Jungle or House?! This is an Oakland supergroup of sorts with members of OWL, CRIMSON SCARLET, FILTH CHAIN and others. It's like the anger and rage of DISCHARGE with the epic-ness of LSD and IRON MAIDEN. They're quite fashionable as well. Watch out!



OTHER GREAT STUFF THAT NEEDS TO BE PUT IN YOUR FACE: PRIMITIVE PACT – *Injustice* 7" EP (Nightrider / Total Fucker), PISSBATH – *Discography* CS (Funky Frankenstein), FREAK VIBE – *Prostration* CS (Casino Trash), V/A – *City Babies Attacked By Bats* CS, WHOOSIE WHAT'S IT'S – *Owl Systems Go* LP (Crankin' 18), SLAYER live, and COCK SPARRER live. That was hard. I hate everything. Actually I'm liking punkers these days. They dress a lot better and smell nice. Send me tapes! F.T.W., A.C.A.B.

♠AMELIA ANOK♠

***NEGATIVE INSIGHT* #2: *Bristol Breakout* (zine) with CHAOS UK – *Studio Outtakes '81-'83* 7" EP (Social Napalm)**
Who the fuck puts this much effort into anything except for Erik from Social Napalm Records? I don't think any of us can touch this for a release in 2014. This punk package came with pro-printed *Negative Insight* zine with unseen photographs and rare interviews with your favorite bands like CHAOS UK and DISORDER and your favorite label, Riot City Records. The font is readable and here is no computer graphic nonsense, just pure cut'n'paste. There is also a wall-worthy foldout poster of CHAOS UK. Then there is the CHAOS UK 7" with unreleased outtakes. And not unreleased outtakes where you're like "Oh, gee thanks. Some crappy, inaudible nonsense recorded through a glue bag." No! These tracks are *studio* outtakes so the quality is solid. The two tracks are "Police Protection" and the powerful "Maggie," all packaged in the classic Riot City style aesthetic. Erik, you're a fucking square but you did punk justice here! 1982 in 2014.

SADIST – *Blood Song* CS (self-released)
This tape is for lovers of aggressive distorted hardcore with some reverb and electronics. I listened to and dubbed this tape for days on end. I mailed it all over the world to punks from London to Tokyo—I had to spread it. It's one of those demo tapes that come along once in a blue moon where you wonder why it didn't just go straight to vinyl. Each drum hit sounds like a bomb impact, the vocals claw your hearing and make it bleed, the guitar wails a siren, and the bass is violent. Thank you, Boston. SADIST features members of KOWARD and G.A.S.H.

STRUGGLING HARSH IMMORTALS – *Lucifer Rising* 7" EP (Crust War)
S.H.I. features members of ZOUO, DANSE MACABRE, NASHI, and the STALIN. If you have any love for industrial and harsh noise, then this release will not disappoint. It is less fluid than their self-titled 2013 7" on Crust War but still gives you satisfaction while pushing your punk and metal boundaries.

REACTOR – *Deadly Visions* 7" EP (Distort Reality)
I am a big believer in supporting bands that exist today and not reunions of bands from thirty years ago. REACTOR has one of the best guitarists I've seen in a long time and Tony Bartek on vocals—ever heard of RELIGIOUS WAR? You don't need to look back thirty years to find punk, substance or style—you got it all right here. Get off the internet!

MARY MONDAY AND THE BITCHES – "I Gave My Punk Jacket to Rickie/Popgun" 7" (HoZac)
Thank you HoZac Records for the MARY MONDAY and MIKE REP AND THE QUOTAS reissues this year. I don't know if I want MARY MONDAY to be my wayward mama as Rotten Ron stated earlier but she sure as hell gives me a thrill (rest her soul)! This single is riding the crest of the first wave of punk and they even opened for the RAMONES in San Francisco. There is nothing more punk than MARY MONDAY taunting you with her snotty vocals and that classic (what we now call) KBD style. MARY MONDAY may even be the first female-fronted punk single? This reissue was kind of a big deal…so put on your punk jacket, go out and get this!

PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider)
This debut 7" contains three tracks of demented blown out hardcore from Oakland, California. Ever hear NASHI *No Call A Name* EP? Or maybe the CONFUSE demo? Well this is that but weirder with female vocals clad in bondage gear. Now, who doesn't want some of that?

SOME NEW BANDS YOU MUST LOOK OUT FOR IN 2015: ISOTOPE (Oakland), HEATHEN (NYC), PMS 84 (Portland), MUTANT ITCH (Fresno), ASEPTIC (Philadelphia), KORROSIVE (Oakland), the STASI (Philadelphia), CREEPING DOSE (NYC), MEATBAG (Boston)
Here in Oakland we had a fun time this past year seeing the CRUCIFIX at their 30-year commemorative show when they played as 1984 at Manic Relapse Fest Volume 2. They played *Dehumanization* in its entirety from start to finish. There were more amazing live shows from BLAZING EYE basement gigs to the POIKKEUS West Coast tour. Just a warning to all you punks—don't miss out on Manic Relapse Volume 3 in March of 2015!

RIP BRUCE ROEHRS & NICK POOT FOREVER!
LONG LIVE PUNK!

RYAN MURPHY

HARD STRIPES – *Duress* 7" EP (Vinyl Conflict)
A real knuckle pounder, this one came in at the tail end of 2013 to give me hope and promise for a ridiculous 2014. After a solid year of peppering this EP in my at home playlists, it holds up to every record on this list and beyond. There is a recent release on Triple B that continues the barbarity, but this one has had such an indelible mark on my year, it stands alone on my list. Definitely the most played record of my 2014. Can't hate enough.

WARTHOG – *Prison* & *Exterminate Me* 7" EPs (Iron Lung / Katorga Works)
Possibly my most anticipated release of 2014. Having seen these guys in New York a bunch and snagging their (fucking impeccable) demo prior to them hitting the studio, I knew this was a force to be reckoned with. The guitar tone has teeth, the drums feel like they are hitting you, the bass and vocals tie this eye-popping package together. Relentless and some of the best songs recorded in 2014. Fucking smashers.

PROXY – "Slow Suicide/Lawless" & "Fine Win/Undone" 7"s (Ugly Pop / Discos MMM)
These Canadians win for the year's best Boot Boi punk outfit by a mile! Their string of EPs (including last years *Police Car*) have blown away the current crop of close shave, Doc Marten punks by incorporating a heavy dose of MOTÖRHEAD's swagger in with the BLITZ worship. Could not have asked for a better band to nail the sound everyone wanted to hear this year. Fucking essential.

BOSTON STRANGLER – *Fire* LP (self-released)
In a crowded field of hardcore heavyweights the BOSTON STRANGLAH is on top. With this release the band has gone away from the tributary aspect of the Boston hardcore legacy, as seen on prior releases, and really come into their own. We all knew this was on the way, no surprises, but following up something like *Primitive* is no easy task. Actually, it's one that is doomed to failure for many reasons. This record, however, stands up and stands out as a definitive HxC record alongside their beast of a debut.

VIOLENT REACTION – *Dead End* 7" EP (Painkiller / Quality Control / Rain On The Parade)
Ooof! Such a solid follow up to their outstanding debut EP! This record has hints of straightforward punk while tying classic straightedge hardcore sing-alongs, blasting melodies, and mean fucking attitude into a nasty little knot. Only more of the best to come from this crew of UK Skinheads, punk rock devotees and straightedge mosh monsters.

HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS – *Stay Home!!* LP (Toxic State)
HANK WOOD proves themselves as an undeniable force that cannot be ignored, one of the most interesting and entertaining band of misfits seen today. Incredibly talented and innovative, this second record showcases that their sound is not just a schtick and their presence will not fade as the novelty wears off. Point being, there is no novelty but rather exciting possibilities offered by this wild bunch. Can't wait for more.

HOUNDS OF HATE – *Hate Springs Eternal* LP (Braddock Hit Factory)
A solid listen, front to back, each track is diverse and delivers the hardcore reality. Most reminiscent of legendary SICK OF IT ALL's best years, *Hate Springs Eternal* will hold up not only through 2015, but well beyond. Let's hope these keepers of the faith have many more riffs, breakdowns and tours left in them. Fantastic record.

2014 TOP TENS

BRAINBOMBS – *Disposal of a Dead Body* 2xLP (Skrammel)
One of the most revered and despised bands of modern times is for me, a total wormhole of interest and amazement. Aside from how you view this project, the quality of music remains top notch and cannot be overlooked. I must add that the production on this is not up to snuff compared to earlier releases. The songwriting, though, is as mind fucking as ever, a wonderful incorporation of trumpet squeaks, jazzy riffs and repetitive hypnosis that bring the blunt lyrical spouts to a surreal level of introspection. Not a good introduction to the band as this is a lot of material that only seasoned vets can appreciate in such a large dose, but fucking unreal (again).

IRON LUNG – *Savagery* 7" EP (Iron Lung)
This band needs no introduction, they need no more ink spent on how they consistently deliver and interest hordes of music geeks with each release. This brutal EP, in contrast to last years brilliant and baffling *White Glove Test* full-length, focuses on the raw, aggressive mayhem that initially incarnated the genre they have come to define. A total winner that blows away all idea' that powerviolence cannot be super innovative. This may be their nastiest record to date, but the refined execution and above average song structure separate it from the pack. So essential.

REBARKER – single-sided 12" (Désordre Ordonné / Family Business / Microsleep / Phantom / Per Koro)
This single-sided 12" is an amazing testament to the devotion and fury Germany's REBARKER has for their music and scene. A total meltdown of intensity, resulting in unhinged rage and vitriol. The songs are balanced nicely by melody but overwhelmingly punishing—standing tall with heavyweights BURIAL YEAR, LOMA PRIETA, and the amazing JUNGBLUTH.

SHIT ZOO

Hello world. Amongst other stuff, I play in PIG DNA and do demo and record reviews for MRR. *I prefer noise but music is good sometimes too. Here are a lot of words to talk about punk shit. ;-)*

YEAR END TOP TEN RECORDS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER OK?

ABORTICIDIO – 時々私は死ぬしたい 7"EP (General Speech)
Beautiful, shitty noise out of Mexico City. ABORTICIDIO takes the GAI approach and does it with aplomb: high-gain fuzz and obscene drawings abound here. The closer "Let's Dance to the Noise Punk!" is even a decent Chuck Berry rocker in the spirit/tradition of "Blood Spit Night (for ever 76)." In short, I love this EP and the fact that it was released by General Speech was already a good indication of that.

BLAZING EYE – *No Outside* 7" EP (Overdose)
BLAZING EYE graced the Bay Area with a series of shows this past spring and summer and I think I caught all of them. I was sold instantly along with almost every other punk in the world. On point UNITED MUTATION vocals with equal parts pogo and ZOUO—dark, bouncy punk that oozes *punk*. Most deserving band for whatever hype/bullshit gets thrown around: BLAZING EYE continues to only make great songs.

DESTRUYE Y HUYE – *Oscura Sociedad* 7" EP (Verdugo)
Oscura Sociedad is an amalgamation of various styles of Spanish punk, merging raw and melodic into one solid sound that ably moves between D-beat and midpaced slow burners. I totally get a TOZIBABE feel too, there's just a dark atmosphere to the songs and the recording that is hard to articulate. Something special has been going on in LA the past few years and DESTRUYE Y HUYE are clearly an important part of that.

EEL – *Endless Fucker* LP (Konton Crasher / Mind Cure)
EEL came out to the West Coast in the spring of 2013 and we were undeservedly blessed with their presence. Even though it's been out nearly a year now, I still listen to this LP at least once a week: "Violent Anarky" is just top-notch shit. The EEL / PISSBATH split EP is also a great slab of noise punk and a fitting posthumous PISSBATH release (RIP).

IN SCHOOL – *Praxis of Hate* EP (Kill Test)
Sometimes bands get overlooked, but IN SCHOOL has riffs and raw D-beat pounding with vocals that spit scorn worth hearing. Seriously, check out the lyrics to the opener "Conquest": "Bastard's son has set again / off to rape some other land / nothing to beat, nothing to beat / the dogs are howling." USHC aggression wielded by not just some normative shithead. Sometimes punk is a total fucking crapshoot.

LASTLY – *Crazy Fucked Up Deadly Local!* 7" EP (Hardcore Survives)
You've gotta hear the drums on this thing. The snare is really high in the mix and it gets used to great effect: whether in the hard as nails Side B intro or in the tempo change midway through opener "A Look at the Now." Crusty noisecore from Japan with actual songs. It's not quite at the manic speed of D-CLONE's *Creation and Destroy*, but there's a strong relation to those recordings (very similar mixes). So good.

MAQUINA MUERTA – CS (Black Mold)
This is too good to not bend the rules a bit for so I'm claiming that my cassette version came out in the US in the spring (AKA within "2014 Year End Top Ten" parameters). MAQUINA MUERTA play, hands down, the most inspiring music I've heard all year. Raw, desperate and driving 1-2 D-beat distilled into six tracks. Another review referred to the "chaotic chatter" of cymbals and that's just a perfect description for this recording. I think this EP should be handed out along with copies of *Fight Back*...just for, I don't know... educational purposes? I know some will think this is nothing special or unique, but I vehemently disagree—it's like when I first listened to DISASTER.

PISTOL JOKE – *I Am I, Fucker!!* CS (self-released)
This was a cassette only release from what I can gather and I'm not even sure if MRR ever got a copy in; nonetheless, this is a perfect follow up to PISTOL JOKE's *We Just Shit* 7" EP from 2013. Pogo noise from Japan that actually just reminds me, musically, of CONFUSE—bass tone and tempo are pretty much perfectly aligned. That's about as good as it gets, folks. They even cover TOM AND BOOT BOYS "Kill the DJ" and it makes me really hopeful: if TOM AND BOOT BOYS could come to the US in 2014 then I don't see why PISTOL JOKE can't come over in 2015.

SAVAGEHEADS – *Wrong Side of the Law* 7" EP (Twerp / X-Ploit)
This first EP from SAVAGEHEADS shows just how fluid the transition could be to our post-BKB world, with a great deal of familiarity between this recording and the tracks from BLOODKROW BUTCHER's final release *Nigh Hell*. SAVAGEHEADS emphasize the UK82 without distancing from their foundation in Boston hardcore, writing memorable songs that make you want to move.

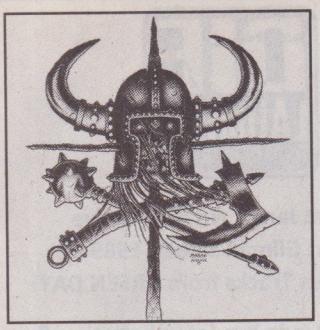
STRUGGLING HARSH IMMORTALS (S.H.I.) – *Lucifer Rising* 7" EP (Crust War)
S.H.I. is ex-ZOUO and has seven members—one just for samples and one just for noise. Obviously from those facts alone I knew this was going to be one of my favorite releases of the year. The A-side is some hard metallic punk, with nice flourishes of guitar leads and weird noise effects, but it's the B-side title track that really cements this EP in my top ten. "Lucifer Rising" is a collusion of industrial, techno and Japanese hardcore that just makes me smile: it's like if *M.A.N.* was upbeat. As a fan of the *Matrix* soundtrack for the last fifteen years, I'm so stoked on shit like this being made today.

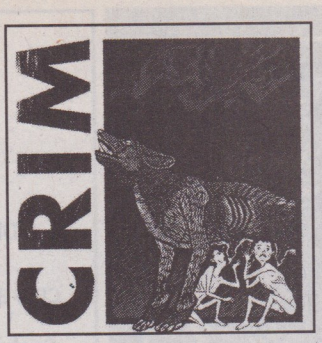
DEMOS:

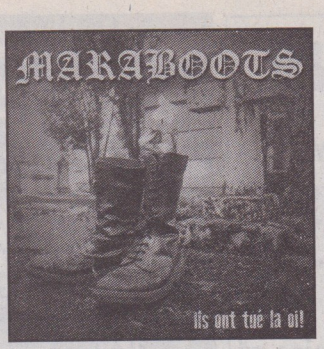
As a demo reviewer I feel like I came across so many releases from new bands that foster hope for a less-than-absolutely-terrible 2015. It would be far too long to list all of them, but here are some of my favorites of the American noisy and/or raw variety: SPETSNAZ, ANTI-ZEN, COMBAT KNIFE, SADIST, BLANK SPELL, AUSENCIA, ALLERGY, APRIORI (favorite current Bay Area band), MEATBAG, SUNSHINE WARD, VIDEO FILTH, PMS 84, STARK MOON, CHAOS TRIBE, ELECTROCUTIONER, and so many more. Bless them all.

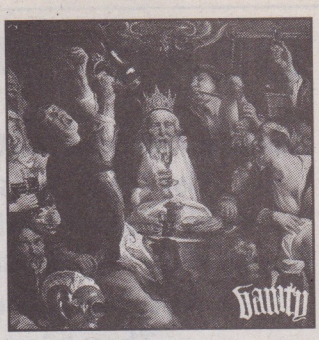
LIVE:

Best live set goes to the almighty SPETSNAZ. MUTANT ITCH also routinely killed it with their brand of "chaotic idiot pogo noise" whenever they came up to Oakland. GAG helped me break my glasses when they covered "Glue"









at the OLY HC Fest, so thank you for that—it was well worth the trouble. ASPECTS OF WAR and L.O.T.I.O.N. stole the show together at the New York TOM AND BOOT BOYS gig in October, though I wasn't in the room for the mortar so maybe that was cool too. Similarly SADICOS at Manic Relapse was enthralling from start to finish and the 4-song tape they had for the fest is really fucking good. GREEN BERET and CONDITION continue to get even better live, especially for the show they shared in SF. Italian legends EU'S ARSE exceeded any expectations with their ferocious energy and passion in playing. And of course it was a treat to get to see FRENZY and ZYANOSE—both such tight live bands. My favorite show that I got to play was at the Boiler Room in Boston with local luminaries MEATBAG, ANIMAL MOTHER, and SUNSHINE WARD—great gig and great venue. We broke a couch to a STIFF LITTLE FINGERS sing-along and ate french fries with blueberry maple syrup at IHOP around 4 am. Thanks, fuckos!

2014 HONORABLES:

There were a ton of great records this year. I was kind of blown away by the quality of USHC that came through the west coast this summer. All had releases this year that I'm sure will be covered elsewhere this issue but yes, y'all were good. Elsewhere on the hardcore front were great records by: FLACCID, LATEX, TERCER MUNDO, RAZORHEADS, KOWARD, S.H.I.T., and BLOTTER. On the more D-beat side of things were the CONTRAST ATTITUDE/ASPECTS OF WAR split, AMBUSH flexi, PROCESS LP and of course the new DHK EP. Some of the best raw hardcore punk ever is being made right now, so stop complaining. But if you really wanna stick to old stuff: in addition to POISON GIRLS and STIGMATHE reissues, I highly recommend picking up the QLOAQA LETAL LP.

That's all that I could remember for 2014. Alright 2015, let's start with the SOW THREAT EP… and maybe a new DEATH DUST EXTRACTOR record?

Good health and anarchy.
ANOKOK?

TURBO! AND GANG

Twelve months but only ten records?! The Gang almost broke up over this task. In the end this list will be wrong. A couple bands have released albums in December that simply haven't arrived in the mail and tomorrow I'm sure I will remember something that should have trumped something else on here, but for what it's worth, these are ten records that the Gang and I have been consistently using for a party soundtrack and breaking furniture to. 2014 was a top year for Oi! and skinhead music and I can't wait to see what 2015 brings. Wreck it!

RAZORBLADE – *My Name Is Vengeance* LP (Rebellion)
My Name is Vengeance is a powerful Oi! record. This is RAZORBLADE's seventh full-length and it's near-flawless. Hard Oi! Not metal or hardcore, just bloody gravel vocals over battle-march skinhead rock'n'roll. Every song on the album is about struggle and conflict. Fighting for your country, fighting for you club, fighting for your right to party, fighting against the juggernaut of anger and boredom. Razorblade Forever, Forever Razorblade! Rah!

VANITY – *Vain In Life* LP (Katorga Works)
This is the voice! The voice of New York City! These backstreet kids play '77 proto-Oi! with clean guitars, simple drums, and some serious antisocial attitude. The last band to do this style this well was the TEMPLARS. It's gonna take some government action to get this record outta rotation here at HQ.

CRIM – LP (Secret Bridge / Tesla / Walk Alone)
Gang vocals and hooks are what keep me coming back to this righteous LP. The music is catchy, street level melodic punk. But it's more than just the back alley beat that gets the Gang pogoing into the fridge and sloshing diet-Mt. Dew everywhere. There is an emotion and spirit that wells up and spills over the language barrier (all songs in Catalan). The dichotomy of presenting ardent topics in a pool-party atmosphere is what I enjoy most about better melodic punk and CRIM are at the top. Break out the *porrons* and get rad.

NOI!SE – *The Scars We Hide* LP (GMM / Randale)
We love dumb music. Like wikkid dumm. Songs about beer, and girls and hating your job and being proud of your pride. Stomping around stomping something. Sometimes Oi! gets super dumb. Yet, we still love it. But sometimes a band comes along and raises the bar a notch and you notice it. All of the above themes show up on *The Scars We Hide,* but the delivery is done so as to not make it blatant and cliché. The songs are layered; the vocals (all BARENAKED LADIES jokes aside) are great and inspire living room sing-alongs not seen since the first CRIMDAM record dropped. And the bass... goddamn. Future classic.

MAJOR DISAPOINTMENT – *Underground Allegiance* LP (Grey Zone / Skinflint)
Do you love blue collar American Oi!? I do. The Gang does. Know who doesn't like this record? Bums, sluggards, and poltroons. MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT gets the bottles flying and my blood pressure rising. Shove the spirit of '69. Give me the spirit of '89! Hippies out! Loadies out! ATF out! Tax is control! This record gets a lot of spins Wednesday nights.

BATTLE RUINS – 12" (Rock 'N' Roll Disgrace)
Is anyone not in the know about this band? From their first demo these dudes have been on a roll. Mixing NWOBHM with bare-bones knuckle dragging Oi! BATTLE RUINS melted our collective faces with the seven tunes found on this 12". These are anthems for American Vikings. "*The Hammer falls again / I take their heads for my kin / There's no remorse for the weak / Slaughtering the wolves like sheep!*" Give me my turkey leg!

OUTREAU – *Revenge* 7" EP (Crom / Une Vie Pour Rien?)
Dark, hardcore Oi! with slow tom-heavy drums, fuzzed-out guitars and basslines that sound like they are coming from a tank tread. This is an intimidating sound. The three songs on this 7" are not enough. It's a lean offering of a possible bounty that is to come. But that's why we keep playing this thing. It's not on constantly (BOB SEGER is) but when it does get played, it gets flipped at least three times. Stamp of approval right there!

MARABOOTS – *Ils Ont Tué La Oi!* 7" EP (Une Vie Pour Rien?)
I'm a homer so I will always say the USA has the best Oi! bands hands down. That being said, some of the Gang make a pretty good case for France as the *nation de Oi*! This EP is MARABOOTS final(?) recording and with their passing France loses one of its exemplary bands. The use of saxophone is what I think about when I think about French Oi! and MARABOOTS use it perfectly. But beyond the brass, you have a band that knows their roots. SNIX, BRUTAL COMBAT, and TOLBIAC'S TOADS inform the sound of MARABOOTS, yet they still achieve a style that is current and unique. They will be missed.

THE CLICHÉS – "Bovver Boots/Riot" 7" (Randale)
Lots of bands are tapping back into the glam side of Oi! and cutting junk shop bovver boogie tunes, but THE CLICHÉS just do it *better*. This double barrel 7" of gutter-glam picks up where their 2012 LP, *Streetrock For The Working Class,* left off. Side A is the title-track and it is a cowbell stomper about putting your boots to work. The B-side, "Riot," is a piano-punk warning to those suburban rebels who would use any excuse to pitch a fit and start some shit. The attitude on this little record keeps it from falling into pastiche or parody. Real ruck'n'roll from some of Sweden's finest.

V/A – *New Breed Rising* CD (100% British Oi! / Rebellion)
This is almost an overload: four bands, sixteen songs, forty-five minutes; QUEENSBURY RULES, ADVERSE SOCIETY, NO QUARTER, and STEEL COMB. This is the soundtrack Saint George was listening to while he slayed the dragon. All bands hail from England except for STEEL COMB who call Edinburgh home. There are subtle differences in style between the four outfits, but all show their love of classic English Oi! 100% British Oi!, and Rebellion have put together an A+ representation of the current wave of the British shave.

VIKTOR VARGYAI

I live in Hungary where I spend most of my time listening to music that has not been released in the current year. Thus, my whole November and December for the past three years have been filled with rushing to listen through the whole year and feeling sorry for not including more non-*American/Spanish/Scandinavian/Japanese, and women-identified bands in every micro-sub genre I like. Piling up records is fun, but ten years from now I will probably have better answers to what the greatest speed punk, freak core whatever gender band from Bolivia or Turkey or Malaysia was. After all this is not a fucking talent show; the important thing is to listen to music for your whole life and feel fucking great while you do it. You have heard these records. These are not reviews but the reasons why I love them.*

DEAD TANK

Decades/Failures "G00DBY3" LP
Post Teens / Rose Cross 7"
Cold Waste "Primitive" Tape
Trophy Wife "All The Sides" Tape
Asid Bateri "Demo" Tape
Thou "Ceremonies of Humiliation" 3xLP
Telepathic Lines "s/t" Tape
Hexis "XI" LP
Decades/Failures "002" Tape
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Prince- S/T II 7" EP
Murmurs- "Bound" LP
Cancers- "Fatten The Leeches" LP
Beach Slang- "Who Would Ever Want Anything So Broken?" 7"EP

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Spraynard- "Cut & Paste" LP (Reissue)
Purple 7- "Gulf Of The Afterglow" LP
Get Bent- "Discgraphy" CD/LP
Outta Gas- 7" EP
Basement Benders- 7" EP
Horace Pinker- "Recover" 7" EP

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2014 TOP TENS

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

12"s:

WHITE WARDS – *Cigarette Burns* LP (Iron Lung)
Last year I said this is the hardcore record of 2014 as I know it (then and) now. This connects everything I like in fast music. It's pure rage used for creativity, a million deconstructed pieces put together and blended perfectly. It's based on the Midwest craziness but at the same time so futuristic it doesn't feel like a reproduction of something that once worked. There is risk, there are no wave vibes, noise noise noise, grooves, violence, primitivism, desperation, angst, joy, everything. This is a brilliant record.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
It's a great thing when there is more in a piece of creative output than what has been put into it. TOTAL CONTROL used to put everything into their music but with *Typical System* they have restricted all their ideas to the bare minimum necessary for plain and pure perfection. It's the noise of being quite about everything. I say everything because TOTAL CONTROL's music is still everything: It's the love of music and the method of expressing yourself via sounds. The fact that they are capable of giving this without a full blown palette of different sounds tells how great they are. Still, it's fun, has grooves; sometimes it's poetic, other times it's dumb as fuck; it's adultish and adolescent at the same time. They turned an easy listening, elevator music song into something as deep as a fucking opera. They are capable of everything.

BIG CRUX – *Ponchito* LP (B<X / Not Normal)
I'm not the biggest fan of the MINUTEMEN so it's a mystery to me why I dig a band that is total worship-core. I not only like BIG CRUX but through their music I appreciate the MINUTEMEN even better. I appreciate the whole fundamental idea of the West Coast sound due to BIG CRUX. This is what's so great about them—they have the enthusiasm to recreate something and during the process create their own voice. Twitchy, sharp guitars are sweating the heat and fight against border control. Skate for fun, watch other people do coke, hate the cops. It's a smart dance party in a dust-filled small town. Bodega beats. This is awesome.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
GOOD THROB's idea could be a simple one but because they are a brightly amateurish group of musicians with a perfect punk plan this makes their music sound as it's pieced together from more than it actually is. This feeling makes me appreciate every one of their parts a lot more than if it were played properly. If something is done perfectly then it says everything about a profession but nothing about the professionals. GOOD THROB is great in causing mistakes that lead to wonderful trouble. This year the greatest records were made by people who are fans of listening to music rather than actual musicians and GOOD THROB is another terrific example of this. They are professional punx. The confident rage of CRASS-ish radicalism waders from the guitars to the vocals but it's just the confidence and no Rimbaud vibe. What happens in the chorus riff of "Acid House" is punk perfection.

IVY – 12" (Katorga Works)
They already had me with their demo and what was great there (aka the irresistible punk quality of their songs) is present here as well, even though the soundscape got clearer. I love how the guitars are distorted into the sounds of cartoon cables buzzing—it makes the thing evil, as the scene for IVY would be NY under Mysterio's attack. This is gutter-core, and overall IVY carries a bunker feelings with cool kids locked together to figure out something better than reality. They also bring into memory some vicious feelings of an evil conspiracy: helicopters flying around, black mass-corrupt priest capes, nihilism, drugs, bad pizza. IVY's sound is so rich that some of my better days were spent with them on constant rotation. The filth of New York is back with them and this is no cheap shot but amazing punk.

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – *Collection* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / Space Ritual)
For some reasons that are beyond my comprehension, people are obsessed with shit. Literally, they hail poo. The greatest thing in LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS is that they could stand still and it would make you feel like you are in a diarrhea storm. Their music creates a nasty, slimy, noisy puke party that is fun to attend *and* you don't have to burn your clothes the next day. And of course that fucking saxophone solo! Primitive optimism or neo-nihilism—whatever, I haven't studied their philosophy to the fullest because I was too busy dancing. Let's say it's a cartoonish absurdity transformed into punk songs. It's funny, ugly and probably smarter than it seems to be. They also have a record label so probably they do actually care, a fact which makes them better for me.

THE LOWEST FORM – *Negative Ecstasy* LP (Iron Lung)
Most menacing record of 2014—constant and confident brutalism. The punk I like is typically more fragile as it gives space for failure that brings along humanity, but the LOWEST FORM's inhuman goodness is mercilessly forcing me to love them and I can't resist. I can't find any reference points to connect their sound to—it's so elliptical it stands by itself. It reaches beyond scenes, eras, sounds; pure fucking destruction. It really is like a chemical substance making you the exact opposite of ecstasy.

ORDEN MUNDIAL – *Obediencia Debida* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Spanish punk is great. Was, is, and probably will be as well. ORDEN MUNDIAL is a great example why. Their idea of playing punk succeeds as I don't have to dig in deep for reasons why I like it, I don't have to do any extra work to say that this is great, it's simply punk music the way I like it. It dares to be what it wants to be: Fucking noisy, vicious punk attack. With clueless guitars playing out, they let their riffs loose to discover whatever territories they can wander to, expanding the landscape of their music and the names of bands that I love.

EXHAUSTION – *Biker* LP (Aarght)
This could be labeled as post-punk but much of this record resonates with a tribal vibe which makes for pre-communication, proto-music. There are even hints of free jazz on this record, if I'm right in thinking that frightening chaotic music that seems to make a bit of sense means free jazz. What I love about this record is it's a full album, an experience, not just songs thrown together and hoping for the best. It's a journey into the deepest fields of humanity. The vocals are pretty indolent, the guitars are levitating, there are actual piano sounds not keyboards. All hail to analogism, feedback, repetitive drums. Sometimes this sounds like EXHAUSTION completely abandoned music as we know it and started building it again while writing this record. As a creator of music, could you ask for more?

ZYANOSE – *Putrid Sick Society* 12" (Brain Solvent Propaganda)
This record has a song called "Poser Must Die!!" I use metal zone for my bass sound so I guess I'll survive.

7"s:

MYSTIC INANE – *Deep Creep* 7" EP (Negative Jazz)
I can't remember how but MYSTIC INANE's demo landed on my laptop a year ago. I was shocked by how great it sounded. It was a mystery because I had no memory of downloading it and their approach of putting together some of the best but distant from each other ideas of punk made me feel like I was dreaming. This is reality, though, and they continue to expand ideas of punk sound with their recent 7". Three songs in nine minutes gathering almost everything I love the best in the best punk. Mutants worshipping UFOs, taking bad drugs, necromancing the heydays of SACCHARINE TRUST, and wearing those wild, worming, sometimes tangling guitars into careless golden-era American Hardcore rage. They sound like a band that has both the idea and control over what they are doing. I wish for a MYSTIC INANE LP in 2014.

DOWNTOWN BOYS – *Callate* 7" EP (Sister Polygon)
It's really funny that the way I see progression in punk is always descending barbaric chaos. Doomtown Boys is chaotic but not in a raging, noisy way—although they are angry and they make noise. I used to hate saxophones; here I love them. I used to prefer to separate art from punk; here I love it. Many interesting things are happening here which are kind of new to my appreciation; but I appreciate them. This vaudeville-core cabaret punk is winning me over. Be a freak!

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" 7" (Iron Lung)
First UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE wrote an amazing LP that is a masterpiece in the Spanish wall of distorted sound robust hardcore genre. Then they conquered the world. Then they dropped the idea that they had mastered and went to a whole different direction with this 7". And it worked. It is still carrying the flag of hardcore and punk, wearing the filth of squats, the sweat-stains of basement shows, the creativity of art school dropouts, the manic frustration of the Catalans. But if we are lucky this is only the earthquake before the volcano bursts again.

OILY BOYS – *Majesty* 7" EP (Disinfect)
I love it when music puts together the already existing best parts from different places. Australia's OILY BOYS sound like a group of bored and angry kids who loved UNITED MUTATION and treated "Kids Of The Black Hole" as their anthem and then thought, "Let's play that all together within one song." And why the fuck would it not work? It's not only working but it's fucking great, brutal, funny, raging, fresh, smart. Total punk fandom for the melted minds, a surf gang doing psychedelic drugs and playing with knives. Sooo good!

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

2014 TOP TENS

2014 TOP TENS

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

IN SCHOOL – *Praxis of Hate* 7" EP (Kill Test)
Some months ago I read an article about punk still being led by white males. My first thought was that punk is *MRR* and that it's run by women, so how could this be true? One of the reasons I can say this is thanks a person who plays in IN SCHOOL, a band that is a vibrant mix of uniquely smart lyrics and top-notch song writing that worships the early era of Touch & Go hardcore. When punk was played too punk it has become hardcore. *Praxis of Hate* showers on me, wakes me up with its energy. It crushes the common belief that there is no variety in hardcore/punk. There is and this is standard greatness.

LA MISMA – *Arete* 7" EP (Toxic State)
When I watch videos of NYC punk shows I see freaks everywhere. They look weird—to them I'm a fucking norm and their whole choreography is too perfect. I feel disconnected. It's cool because they live so fucking far away from me. And then here is LA MISMA from that city, singing in a language I can't understand, screaming in a way I can relate to. Filth soaked, chasing pace punk, singing faster than the riff would let you punk, really real punk that it's already hardcore. LA MISMA catches the inner rage, that mutant feeling when your brain is melting in insecure chaos yet still you go out and yell fuck the bullshit.

FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock)
When you really love something at one point this anything will be a part of you. You won't treat it as the biggest thing in the world it will be a part of your personality and that's really big. Like breathing air, if it weren't around you would be dead. This is captured on this record. That Frau is so punk they can do whatever they want. So they fabricate some wonderful mess of collapsing bedroom chaos. Punk is our lover!

LIFE STINKS – "Portraits/Sweep It Under the Rug" 7" (Total Punk)
The exhibition-core continues. The sound of LIFE STINKS is cartoonish. Like a dark comic book, a monochrome linoleum cut where strangers lose themselves in the meaninglessness of life while they are searching for someone else. Smoking cigarettes in the morning waking up to the rain and drinking still beer that has been warmed up in your palm. Although LIFE STINKS is fun, it's vibrating, it moves towards you. It's sharp and groovy at the same time. Lazy house party theme for coach potatoes. The conflict is really comical; them trying to successfully put together a song, with a stoned mind trying to put everything in order but before they could come up with any result the record is over and another two brilliant songs are written again.

TAPES:

GUN OUTFIT – *Time Slips Away* CS (Perennial)
I have no respect for anyone for whom GUN OUTFIT does not mean something. This new release is just as beautiful as everything they have done so far. Their music is like wine getting better and better with age, and these three new tracks sound like a new crossroad in GUN OUTFIT's life, taking a new interesting direction. How does the movement of sun sound? Some might be able to synthesize that into sounds but GUN OUTFIT raises and sets the sun with their music. One of the most elevating things that happened to me in 2014 was interviewing them and I can still say they are my current favorite band.

PIG DNA – *DOM* CS (Commodity Tapes)
I love all kinds of music but especially music that forgets about the whole existence of the musical history of punk and redoes the sound from scratch while keeping the fundamental ideas. PIG DNA is faithful to the Bay Area idea that all freaks can be themselves and do whatever will bring joy and beauty to this world, let it be transforming everyday terror into disgustingly good punk songs. PIG DNA is dangerously creative. They sound as though they don't tend to give a fuck about the risk of failing with all these ideas thrown together. It's threatening, interesting, dangerous, vicious, amazing.

KARAK – CS (self-released)
Young brutalists hailing from the moldy basement land of the Budapest powerviolence, UFO grind scene. Vicious, freaky, rainbow puke, homemade synthetic drug overdose. Is this hardcore? Yes, this is hardcore.

WILL BLOMQUIST

Another shit year on this shit earth, but if you're reading this I guess that means you survived too. I won't go so far as to say congratulations, but think of these as a consolation prize of sorts, in recognition of your ongoing participation. Better luck next time!

FLESH WORLD – 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
At just over a year old, FLESH WORLD's debut already sounds like a time capsule from some lost post-punk renaissance, an otherworldly blend of fuzzed-out guitars and cooing, slow-burn vocals. Despite them recording 2014's song of the year ("Sturdy Swiss Hiker") I've somehow managed to miss every single one of their Bay Area shows so far. Oof.

SIAMESE TWINS – *Still Corner* LP (Eunuch)
SIAMESE TWINS is my latest bedroom-dwelling obsession. The 7" caught my ear when it came through here, but *Still Corner* is on a whole other plane of dream pop majesty, easily one of the most memorable records I've stumbled across in the last few years. Ethereal vocals reminiscent of LUSH come coated in a reverbed-out haze of guitar, organ and distant wall-of-sound drums, an otherworldly technicolor with a twisted sense of nostalgia. The lyrics are fantastically evocative, touching on loss, alienation and co-dependency, and I'd be lying if I said my heart doesn't melt every time "Submission" oozes its way through the speakers.

PROTESTANT – *In Thy Name* LP (Halo of Flies / Throatruiner)
Five full-lengths and ten-plus records into an already massive discography, Milwaukee's bleak hardcore stalwarts trade in their crust vests for corpse paint (not literally) to produce one of the best black metal/punk crossovers of recent memory. Simply filthy…because you deserve it.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
A searing little slice of hate, this. Taking cues from classic bass-lead UK funk-punk like the AU PAIRS, GOOD THROB stands firmly on its own sonic ground, built around rudimentary, delightfully dissonant riffs and one of the best singers in the game today. I challenge anyone to find better evidence that p-u-n-k still matters in 2014.

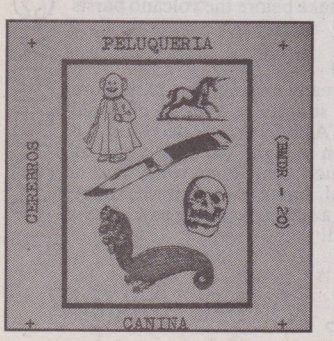
HORROR VACUI – *Return of the Empire* LP (Black Water)
Fantastically melancholic anarcho-goth, Milan's HORROR VACUI blew my mind back to the early '80s when I caught them live on Halloween. The latest in a line of chorus pedal revivalists to pull at my bitter heartstrings, *Return of the Empire* finds them sitting at the top of the class alongside MORAL HEX, BELLICOSE MINDS, and CRIMSON SCARLET. It's hard not to fall in love with vocals that fall somewhere between SISTERS OF MERCY and Germany's criminal underrated FALLEN APART, but it's the straight-up *brilliant* guitar work that marks this as a truly fantastic slice of latter-day post-punk.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
Aussie mutants go retrofuturistic, channeling the living ghosts of the New Romantics and especially GARY NUMAN on their quest for DIY pop perfection. While the more drivingly punk material doesn't always live up to the synthy, KRAFTWERK-inspired side of the band, this diversity is ultimately a strength rather than a distraction. Sounding like the lost single from a dance club scene cut from *Blade Runner*, "Flesh War" is the stuff of mixtape legend, lifting TOTAL CONTROL to genuine dreamboat status.

ZANNA NERA – *Primeval Memory* CS (self-released)
A masterful, massively danceable darkwave synthfuck, ZANNA NERA might have been my favorite local discovery last year. Like RØSENKØPF in 2012, this tape has echoed across the tile floors of my apartment *constantly* since its release in August, burning its dense beats into our collective brains. Her set in the Qilombo basement was easily one of most ecstatic (and blurred) memories I have from 2014.

PELUQUERÍA CANINA – *Cerebros* 7" EP (Blondes Must Die)
The opening riff on this 7" sounds like it belongs on an ambient black metal record, but such impressions quickly give way to the catchiest melodic punk you've heard in ages. ESKROTO DE RATA is probably the most obvious reference point, and PELUQUERÍA CANINA definitely shares that band's sense for enduring vocals and guitar hooks. Any fan of classic Spanish punk sounds won't want to miss this one, though it somehow seems to have slid under a lot of people's radars.

SEX DWARF – *Non-Stop Erotic Noise Cabaret* 12" (D-Takt & Råpunk / Konton Crasher)
Wouldn't want to leave the raw ponx hanging, now would we? Enter SEX



DWARF, a bunch of SOFT CELL-obsessed noise-crust freeks who have churned out one seriously warped piece of aural smut. With blistering drum work and a burnt-to-death guitar tone that would make DISCLOSE proud, this is easily their best slab yet, building on 2013's already-genius *Full av Aska* 7" EP. My sources inform me that they tore up the Eastern US on tour last year, but I'm still waiting to confirm such reports with my own bleeding ears.

WARCRY – *Savage Machinery* LP (Warcry)
There's an infinity of bands that ape DISCHARGE in one way or another, but when it comes to straight-ahead DIS-worship you are unlikely to find any as powerful as WARCRY. A last-minute addition to this list—I only snagged my copy two days before New Years!—*Savage Machinery* only cements their legacy, elevating genre reproduction to an art form unto itself. Everything feels effortlessly dialed to utter perfection, right down to the last pick slide, and pretty much every song has an instantly-classic feel. This will be glued to my turntable for a long, long time.

REISSUES: BLOOD ROBOTS – LP (Thought Crime), KLAXON – *The Kids Today* 7" EP (No Plan), DYSTOPIA – *Human=Garbage* 2xLP (Tankcrimes), RED MONKEY – *How We Learned To Live Like a Bomb* LP (Our Voltage), QLOAQA LETAL – *Nunca, Siempre* LP (Metadona), SACRILEGE – *It's Time To Face The Reaper* 2xLP (Havoc), CRISIS – *Kollectiv* 2xLP (La Vida Es Un Mus), THE APOSTLES – *Punk Obituary* LP (Beat Generation), SCREAMING SNEAKERS – *Violent Days* 7" EP, DESTROY ALL MONSTERS – *Hot Box* 3xLP (Munster)

LIVE SETS: RAGANA all over the Bay Area and Arcata, RAKTA at Lobot in Oakland, HORROR VACUI at the Night Light in Oakland, WHITEHORSE at Oakland Metro & Thee Parkside in San Francisco, MAAILMANLOPPU at the Night Light in Oakland, NEGATIVLAND at the Uptown in Oakland, KRUEL at Los Globos in Los Angeles, COMMUNION OF THIEVES at Deadfest in Oakland, PLEASURE LEFTISTS at the Know in Portland, RITUAL CONTROL at all Bay Area gigs.

ARTO HIETIKKO / *Toinen Vaihtoehto*

Once again I found myself trying to make these lists just before the deadline, in a hurry, so I'm not completely satisfied with them, as I have a feeling that I have forgotten some crucial releases. I also found it a bit difficult to make these lists this time. In earlier years I had too many records I would have wanted to include, but this time I had to spend a lot of time trying to make up my mind. One reason for this is perhaps that there have been extremely many great reissues this year (ALERTA ROJA, POISON GIRLS, QLOAQA LETAL, CRISIS, HHH, NEWTOWN NEUROTICS, IMPACT, EU'S ARSE, PLASTIX, etc. etc.), so I have spent my money buying more old records than usual. There were also many great releases that I haven't been able to get yet, unfortunately. But here we go…

LPs / 12"s / 10"s:

ORDEN MUNDIAL – *Obediencia Debida* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
The second album from this band from Mallorca, Spain, and this time they sure hit the target. This is top-notch hardcore. Definitely one of the best records of 2014, on my top three list of LPs actually. It sounds brutal enough to send pleasant shivers down my neck every time I listen to it. Like an improved, tighter version of such raw punk bands as FIRMEZA 10, OTAN, etc. I like it *very* much.

I KNOW – LP (Angry Voice / Crime Chords / Deviance / Drink And Be Merry / Street Influence / Svoboda / Up The Punx)
Excellent political anarcho-punk / HC from Belarus with angry female vocals. Very possibly in my top three, as this has been spinning on my turntable constantly since I bought it (and before that I listened to it countless times via their Bandcamp). The recording, production and songwriting are flawless. Even the occasional metallic riffs (yeah, I hate metal) don't spoil the experience. I love this LP. P.S. I realized too late that this LP came out actually already at the end of 2013, not in 2014—my mistake, but it does not change the fact that it has been one of the most played records on my turntable in 2014, so let's keep in on the list.

ΑΡΧΗ ΤΟΥ ΤΕΛΟΥΣ – *Πτώση* LP (Sabrota / Scarecrow / We Don't Fight It)
The cassette version of this came out already in 2013, so strictly speaking it does not even belong to this list, but because this long-awaited vinyl version came out in 2014 I'll just pretend that it's a brand new release. I have been listening to this *a lot*, and don't seem to be able to get tired of ARHI TOU TELOUS. It's dark, melodic, almost epic, and it sounds so sincere, as Greek bands often tend to. It's post-punkish, but I have a feeling that they also have firm anarcho-punk roots.

THE LOWEST FORM – *Negative Ecstasy* LP (Iron Lung)
Primitive, noisy, violent hardcore from this UK band. Enough distortion and feedback to make my soul sing and my already damaged eardrums shiver with fear. The vocalist sounds scary and deranged, which for me is the cherry on top of the cake.

KOVAA RASVAA – *En Ole Edes Olemassa* LP (Emancypunx / Campary / Demilitarised Subconscious / Raccoone)
I don't know if it's fair to include this KOVAA RASVAA LP on the list, because it contains songs from their two 7"s, but as it also contains new songs I pass it through. Whirlwindish hardcore with an angry female vocalist who sounds like she's out of her head. Seriously. This band destroys.

GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse)
Wild no-holds-barred hardcore fucking punk. A smashing killer record full of spit. Fucking sick. I enjoy every second of it.

ARCTIC FLOWERS – *Weaver* LP (Deranged)
It took a few listens before I started to like this album. To be honest, after the first listen I forgot this LP in the pile, too busy listening to some other new releases. Later I found out that this is definitely one of the best post-punk releases of 2014. Stan Wright's guitar work is exceptional, and the tunes are good from the start to the end.

DEZERTER – *Większy Zjada Mniejszego* LP (Pasazer)
I'm a big fan of this long-running Polish band, and while this is not the best DEZERTER LP ever, it has been spinning on my turntable numerous times. It's awesome that after all these decades this classic band is still able to make records like this.

CRUTCHES – *Lurad* LP (Distro-y / Not Enough / Phobia / Rawmantic Disasters)
After a splendid demo and a terrific EP, CRUTCHES release an awesome LP full of top-quality full-throttle D-beat with crust and noisecore elements. The playing is tight, while the reverb vocals bring some extra insanity to the sound. The end result is a kick-ass album. This is the sound of distortion.

GENERACION SUICIDA – *Todo Termina* LP (Doomtown / Going Underground / Symphony of Destruction / Trabuc)
I usually don't like out-of-chord vocals, but I make an exception with some bands. GENERACION SUICIDA is one of them. Actually, while their music is very melodic, sometimes almost in the vein of MASSHYSTERI, they always manage to sound very punk (partly thanks to those out-of-chord vocals).

BUBBLING UNDER: ACCIDENTE – *Amistad y Rebelion* LP (La Agonía de Vivir / Blondes Must Die / Contraszt! / Distribuidora Soroll / Grita O Muere / Halo of Flies / In My Heart Empire / Tranzophobia / Walking Is Still Honest / Veganismo Es Respeto)
I used to love ACCIDENTE's first album, but haven't listened to their second one nearly as many times. Possibly because it's a bit more pop than the first one, at least to my ears. The songs, however, are top class on this, too. It's beautiful. I loved their show at Puntala punk fest, too.

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

THEIR SAY EPs / Singles:

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" 7" (Iron Lung)
UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE is definitely one of my biggest current favorite bands. I loved their LP and I love this 7", too. Experimental hardcore / punk with slight psychedelic influences. Anthemic.

KOHTI TUHOA – *Kujanjuoksu* 7" EP (Svart)
Now this is it! Full-blast noisy hardcore with female vox. A friend of mine said that this sounds like FRAMTID in the kissing booth with PYHÄKOULU. I think he hit the nail on the head. The production is really heavy, and there is enough distortion—and then some more. It sounds like the sound level meters were on red all the time. The vocals are a bit too buried in the mix, but on the other hand it brings the feeling of vocalist desperately struggling to get heard in the middle of the distorted wall of sound. An incredible record, what more can I say?

RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada / La Vida Es Un Mus)
After their excellent debut LP, RAKTA puts out another excellent slab of vinyl, this time a 7" single. If you listen carefully, you can hear certain classic bands of this genre in the background (XMAL DEUTSCHLAND, to name one), but this Brazilian band transcends labels, being unlike any other current group. Experimental—yes. Atmospheric—yes. Mind-melting, mysterious, exciting—yes, yes, yes. Post-punk—yes, but much, much more, too.

SUICIDAS – *No Nos Mata La Muerte* 7" EP (No Nostalgia)
If you're not afraid of melodies in punk, it does not get much better than this. But even though this EP is packed with melodic punk, it never sounds wimpy, or too poppy. SUICIDAS prove that it's possible to sound powerful and have catchy, melodic songs at the same time.

DARFÜR / AUTUUS? – split 7" EP (Bad Hair Life / Filthy Rat / Hakaniemi Hardcore)
I'm easy to please: many times just simple, good hardcore is enough to make my heart sing. DARFÜR is one of my biggest current Finnish faves. They put out one 7" EP in 2013, but I feel like the songs on this split sound more in-your-face, rawer, even though they are from the same session. I like everything in DARFÜR here: the violent guitar sound, an excellent bassist, and desperate sounding vocals. Good songs and lyrics, too. The standout for me is "From Disrael With Love," but all songs rip. AUTUUS? on the B-side is quality shit, too: very tight RIISTETYT-influenced hardcore, with an excellent vocalist. Bands like AUTUUS? and SOTATILA are doing it right: hardcore, not metal. That helps to keep the energy level high. Superb!

REPLICA – *Beast* 7" EP (Prank)
Mean-sounding, brutal, aggressive hardcore that totally destroys. Angst-ridden, pissed-off and ugly, in the best possible way.

OBEDIENCIA – *El Ángel Exterminador* 7" EP (Sólo Para Punks)
OBEDIENCIA's outstanding first EP came already three years ago and I had been really waiting forward to finally get some new material from them in my hands. At first listening I felt like *El Ángel Exterminador* was not as good as the debut EP, but it's still good enough to be one of my favorite 7"s of 2014. The singer's powerful and piercing voice reminds me of Teresa Covarrubias from the BRAT. The songs are very melodic and have no distortion but sound yet not a bit wimpy.

MAAILMANLOPPU – *Haista Vittu Maailma* 7" EP (Combat Rock Industry)
MAAILMANLOPPU was busy in 2014: a US tour, two 7" EPs, and a split with KUUDES SILMÄ. On this EP the name of the game is full-on hardcore attack. On their fast songs, MAAILMANLOPPU always sounds like being close to running out of breath, but still managing to keep their playing incredibly tight.

INFERNÖH / NOMAD – split 7" EP (Rawmantic Disasters)
INFERNÖH really knows how to make top-class hardcore in the vein of the mighty TOTALITÄR. Nothing new here but it's so well done that all I can do is surrender. On side B we get the masters of noisy punk: NYC's NOMAD. This is one hell of a D-beat mayhem split.

ANTI-CORPOS – *Contra Ataque* 7" EP (Drink And Be Merry / Emancypunx / Fêmur Distra Feminista / No Gods No Masters)
The funny thing about this 7" is that even though I had listened to the songs on their Bandcamp, I did not intend to buy the record. I got it because it was given to me for free at a punk show in Helsinki. What a silly billy I was. These four Brazilian women play raging hardcore full of anger, screaming against machismo, homophobia, and inequality. This is *punk*.

BUBBLING UNDER: EEL – *Endless Fucker* 7" EP (Even Worse)
Hmm…This is number eleven on my list, but I just had to… I don't know why I like this stupid 7" so much. Perhaps it has something to do with my love for bands like CONFUSE, JANKY, GAI, KURO, DUST NOISE, CHAOS C.H., etc. Those Japanese bands that paid homage to early DISORDER and CHAOS UK, and now this American band is paying homage to those Japanese bands, I guess. The vicious circle goes on and on, and that's fine for me, as I have a soft spot in my heart for stuff like this. I like the primitiveness and the charming clumsiness of this distorted, drunken-sounding pogo-punk EP. Electric drill sound effect included.

BEN C. TROGDON / *Nuts!*

I am the edit of Nuts! *fanzine and I play drums in Ivy. I've listened to the following records a lot. I've taped them for myself so I could walk around town listening to them; I've weirdly stared at the album artwork; I've fallen asleep and dreamt about seeing these bands play live (and I've seen all these bands play live every chance I could get); I've analyzed and rocked out to these songs while they're playing nowhere but inside of my head; and I've even maybe had sex to a couple of these records?*

I realize that a lot of these releases are from NYC bands. I'm not trying to hate on every other punk scene, I don't know why I like NYC records so much. Maybe it's because I live here, and these are the people I'm around, this is the music I relate to? I don't know, but I love these recs!

BLOTTER – *Under Armour '77* 7" EP (Erste Theke Tonträger / False Form / Katorga Works)
Damn, it's so catchy, but it's intense! You can tell the vocalist is singing about some sci-fi crazy shit. The music is furious but they never lose that groove.

GOOSEBUMPS – *Scared to See a Doctor* 7" EP (Katorga Works)
GOOSEBUMPS is a controversial band—I understand if you love them or hate them. But I think this record rips. It's so cool. It's like scum rock mixed with NYHC. It's nasty and you can mosh to it.

GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse)
Progressive rocking D-beat and it's so exciting! The vocalist has the coolest vocals on the planet. The drumming is so right on. All the songs are interesting and never boring. GAS RAG's slow songs are always my fav, tho!

LA MISMA – *Arete* 7" EP (Toxic State)
This record is so cool because it does its own thing, and it's still super catchy and super punk. The vocals are shouted, high-pitched yelps. And they have style.

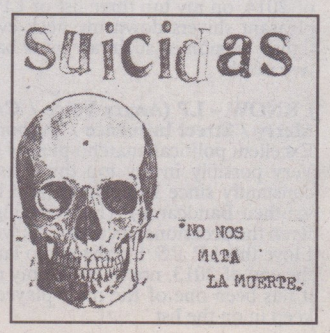
PERDITION – *Martial Law* 7" EP (Toxic State)
Wild, noizy, D-beat scum from New York. Sounds off the chain! Not angular metallic precise D-beat, but rocking raw real shit.

BLAZING EYE – *No Outside* 7" EP (Overdose)
Eye-exploding bouncy punk from hell! I thought he was singing in Japanese but he's not. It's English. So cool. The vocals sound like Satan puking and he's gonna kill you.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
This LP can feel a little long at times, but my two favorite tracks on this thing were on repeat all year. "Double White Denim" is a cool song about looking cool, and my favorite song for sure this whole year is "No Taste." I can relate to it! I feel this jam. I love the way the song builds and comes together. It's so triumphant about being so shitty.

OTHER COOL BANDS THAT PUT OUT GREAT MUSIC IN 2014: NANDAS, DEFORMITY, SLENDER, BAD NOIDS, PIANO MOVERS, SAVAGEHEADS, AJAX, ASPECTS OF WAR, WARTHOG, HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS, IN SCHOOL, BRICKLAYER, BIG ZIT, OOZE, S.H.I.T..

LOOK OUT 2015: For that DAWN OF HUMANS LP!



BIDI CHOUDHURY / In School

What a mind-fuck this year has been. At least it's produced some truly incredible and exciting monster jams.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
I have listened to this record so many times this year that I think of it as a "punk classic," completely forgetting that it was only released this spring. This UK foursome's first LP has somehow surpassed their two 7"s in sheer frenetic electricity and emotional movement / prosody. Every escalating, angular beat delivers a palpable stab—with crawling and determined rage, singer Ellie shouts over a punchy bass and guitar, punctuated statements against the hetero-patriarchy, against the normalization of assault, against the persistence of mindless "wankers." Even in its overwhelming fury, this record is a testament to the power of thoughtful and precise action, but also pointed sarcasm and pure musical wit.

HYSTERICS – *Can't I Live?* 7" EP (M'lady's)
Just as their demo began with a frustrated "aaaahhhh," so does this, except with a decidedly more indignant ferocity that grabs a hold of your head by your scalp and thrusts you into an uncontrollable head-bang / slam-dance / wutevr's-yr-pleasure, while Stephie Cristol's snarling (and fucking brilliant) lyrics and delivery drive this action and provide that much more purpose. I don't want this band to RIP; I want them to come back from the dead and rip our heads off once more! One of the saddest moments of 2014's musical history is HYSTERICS' finality.

FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock)
This 7" comes off the heels of their 2013 demo cassette (also released stateside as an LP this year by Dead Beat Records). Ash Holland's commanding, squealing shouts, almost like an utterly unhinged HONEY BANE, over a post-punky bass and open-chord guitar, with a deliberate stop-and-go beat that's reminiscent of discordant '80s no wavey punk (think TEENAGE JESUS & THE JERKS), but feels much faster, much angrier. This is blistering, slap-in-your face punk.

ORDEN MUNDIAL – *Obediencia Debida* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
I did not think this band could top their phenomenal first release, but they have. *Obediencia Debida* clocks with ten new songs in under twenty minutes, all total ragers. This follow-up speaks against dogmatic culture, institutions and unthoughtful, passive so-called "revolutions," with incredible lyrical wit and consistently searing riffs, complete with unexpected psychedelic breakdowns that are filled with as much hostile lunacy as the rest. This record is absolutely timeless. Do not snooze.

OOZE – *Big Angry* 7" EP (Not Normal)
So, hey, what is in that NWI / Chicago water? It's stylistically apparent that OOZE shares members with BIG ZIT (not to mention many other incredible NWI bands), though very pronounced and exciting points of differentiation are at play here: instrumentally, they bring to mind classic US '80s hardcore greats, and vocally, I can only describe Antonio Holguin as having a deep bass puke sound (like, I can actually hear back of this dude's tongue's crawling out of his mouth and dragging across a cement floor). This is the soundtrack to a maniac's mindscape, and I can't get enough.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal)
It's BIG ZIT, playaaa! This 7" presents us with some truly phenomenal mutant Midwestern hardcore. At once, we witness super catchy BUDGIE-style riffage in combination with Kevin Taylor's hate-filled, alien baby of BAD BRAINS-like vocals, and you can actually hear thrashing from one side of a Midwestern suburban basement room to the other, all the while covered in glowing, nuclear sludge. There is no mincing words here: I genuinely believe that this mutant baby "hate[s] [us] all" and "hope[s] [we] die."

AJAX – *Drag Down* 7" EP (Katorga Works)
AJAX plays a truly mind-melting blend of thrashing hardcore in a sort of *Bill & Ted* fashion—they incorporate an international melange of sound, with definite nods to TOTALITÄR and BASTARD, but also POISON IDEA. And if you think of Tokurow and Jerry A. as the two parts of Station, bashing into each other head-first in the parking lot and merging into one being, you have AJAX's singer: a bellowing monster of hate and destruction, a.k.a. Mike Gorup. I think it's safe to say that these guys know their punk history, but it's also crucial to note that what they're creating is not recycled or pretentious; it's incredibly exciting, straightforward hardcore.

NANDAS – demo CS (self-released)
I remember first hearing this demo and being completely blown away—New York's NANDAS play dark, weirdo hardcore in the vein of RUDIMENTARY PENI and TOŽIBABE. Singer Anahit's raspy, anxiety-riddled vocals, matched only by menacingly deranged riffage, set to almost militaristic drumbeats. Cannot wait for their next release.

CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol* CS (self-released)
Hey, it's another NWI punk band on this list! Hilariously, the name tells you a lot about the band: at times Mark Winters sounds like an iteration of Beldar Conehead who travels through space and time, trying to escape some sort of ominous "psycho killer" (ha ha ha), all the time jamming lots of '70s rock'n'roll, NERVOUS GENDER, and the RESIDENTS. So fucking fun, so fucking catchy.

PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* EP (Nightrider)
Noize punkers make genuine, discordant, cold-hard basement butcher jamz, emblazoned with abject distaste for scene nonsense cred-racking, they are thirsty for destruction. This music is violent, and tastes like steel. Lyrics read almost like terrifying hardcore haikus. PIG DNA has controlled this fucker.

TOP REISSUES: NEO PUNKZ – *Fascist Fuckerz* 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus), SUSPENSE – *Murder With the Axe* 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus), FLESH EATERS – *A Minute to Pray A Second to Die* LP (Superior Viaduct), ALERTA ROJA – *Algo Esta Cambiando...Y Muy Violentamente* LP (Lengua Armada), DEATHWISH – *Tailgate* 12" (Disclaim)

BEST PERFORMANCES: HYSTERICS at The Place; VEXX at Highline; DISTRACT FUTURE & SIN ORDEN at ex-Mount Happy; PRIESTS at Cake Shop; OLIVIA NEUTRON-JOHN at the Hose; DOWNTOWN BOYS everywhere for all of time

BEST ZINES: *Cretins of Distortion*; *Kill Your Parents Garden*; *Making Waves*

IF THIS TOP TEN COULD BE A TOP TWENTY: D.H.K. – *Extincion* 7" EP (Hysteria); TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung); TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe); MYSTIC INANE – *Deep Creep* 7" EP (Negative Jazz); S.H.I.T. – *Generation Shit* (Lengua Armada); OLIVIA NEUTRON-JOHN (all releases); SHEER MAG – *What You Want* 7" EP (Wilsuns RC); FLESH WORLD – "A Line in Wet Grass/Not a Soul" 7" (Iron Lung); SPETSNAZ – demo CS (self-released); SORROWS – demo (self-released)

CANDICE METRAILER

I live in New Orleans and play guitar in MYSTIC INANE and am the vocalist for PATSY. I recently concluded a three-year run of The Atomic Lawn, *a punk radio show on WTUL New Orleans. In my view, 2014 was a year that saw hordes of en vogue punks fetishizing the aesthetics of fringe subcultures but ultimately churning out records as a tame as a gift shop rocking horse. I think these were a few exceptions. I must disclose that I am more qualified to speak on early punk reissues because that's my area of focus and that on the written word in general I am not even qualified enough to compose the obituary of an expired pet gerbil.*

TEN NEW RELEASES:

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Fuck Off is raw, real and leagues tougher than your ostentatious bro dog slam brigade—but don't expect to find D-beats and power chord riffing here. Perfect, no frills drumming, thorny bass lines, and seething, disfigured single note guitar lines, brilliantly atonal but suitable for dancing at times, before breaking into choruses that are so frank and concentrated in sound and delivery they confirm my starry-eyed desires for punk in this time we inhabit. And I'm not a posi person, so what I mean to say is that a band like Good Throb is why I stick around this place and sometimes feel at home among my peers. Acidic, brimming-with-disgust vocals that would make mummy shield the curious ears around the kids table and recall the best moments in later incarnations of SILVER ABUSE when they had female vox. I really can't say more about this record because I fail to find the words to describe how important it is. I know, I know, to each her own, but if you don't love GOOD THROB, you're shit.

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

THEIR SAY

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE

NERV – *USA Off Earth Now!* 7" EP (Lagerville)
I'm convinced this band isn't as beloved as they would be if they wore the right uniform. Instead they are punks of the truest fashion, and don't give a fuck about your collection of tumblr-ready bondage photos ganked from a two-minute google search and dribbled back into the stream of meaningless image conscious garbage that perpetuates in punk social media wanking. I digress. It's wild, fast, and fad-free hardcore and you should get into it.

PANG – *Young Professionals* 7" EP (Grazer)
MODETTES via DELTA 5. If those references mean anything to you (and I know we are way too few in numbers), seek out this record and let's be friends.

NANDAS – demo CS (self-released)
Rudimentary and to the point drumming, alternately pogoing and marching about, is coupled with simultaneously dizzying and cement-in-your-brain riffs on this demo tape from New York punks. Vocals are snarling and lyrically trenchant—the sincerity is dripping from this tape and it's a breath of fresh air.

PURA MANÍA – *Música Para Gente Fea* 7" EP (CV)
Catchy and anthemic Canadian punk with Spanish lyrics that are down to earth and pretty relevant in terms of being political songs about punks or punk lifestyle (they ain't singin' about nuclear war or nothin'). The vocals are catchy enough that even non-Spanish speakers could probably sing along! Some Oi! guitar styling and an obvious love for rodent themed artwork. I like it.

NANCY – "(Get The) Revvup/(Why Am I) Crying?" 7" (Eat the Life)
Glitter'n'glam inflected punk from Brooklyn. Killer demo tape last year, and this release features a piping hot track on the A-side. B-side ain't bad either! Big up also to the *Live On WFMU* tape also released by Chicago's Eat the Life label. Motorcycle jacket, ripped jeans and unkempt hair jams.

FARANG – single-sided 12" (self-released)
Disorderly and selectively atonal throughout, alternately hammering and slithering about, extroverted hardcore punk I like to imagine played by introverted, socially inept weirdos—or perhaps the opposite, life of the party with a healthy social outlook types. i.e. also weirdos.

THE COWBOYS – *Volume Two* CS (Turd Wurld)
GIZMOS-influenced Hoosier punk, a lil' bit cowpunk, loose but tight, great songwriting, painfully obscure. Listen on a website site called Musical Family Tree and track down hard copies of Volumes One through Three. Thanks to Emmy Ramone and their amazing fanzine *Cretins of Distortion* for the tip on this one.

JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numancia* LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Catchy, slick, and gothy but fun and dancy, driving Spanish punk. I usually prefer the breed of goth punk that utilizes more space and minimalism in their sound and this is kind of a layered, non-stop blast all the way through but I can imagine locals completely love this band and I'm pretty into it from over here.

BREAKOUT – *True Crime* EP (Grave Mistake)
I love this band. It's punk, it's hardcore and it's at once pissed off and playful and craftily structured. Thinking man's Oi! sez Crime Wave.

SOME REISSUES:

YDI – *A Place in the Sun* EP (TKO)
American hardcore from 1983, this is not shit. It stands apart from other hardcore groups of the era in sonic guitar weirdness and demented shredding—it cannot be categorized but I will say that these guys are obviously out for blood and mad at the world. WHY DIE!?

KARI PEITSAMO JA ANKKULI – *Jatsin Syvin Olemus* LP (Svart)
Like a gentle PLUGZ or something, but from Finland and in their harmonious language. Like I said, softer, but still for fans of other Finnish punk reissues from Svart Records over the last few years—YPÖ-VIIS, KOLLA KESTÄÄ, etc.

DISHRAGS – *Three* LP (Supreme Echo)
Three gals from Canada influenced by the RAMONES and the CLASH. They stand right up there with these bands in the quality of material, yet are mostly unheard. Shame. This is fucking great punk.

FLESH EATERS – *A Minute To Pray A Second To Die* LP (Superior Viaduct)
Goddamn, if more punks knew and liked LA's FLESH EATERS we would live in a better punk world. This band is unparalleled as far as originality in the cowpunk, rockabilly, and punk'n'roll scene that proliferated in LA punk in the late '70s. This particular LP, the band's second, features a rhythm section that included DJ Bonebrake (at times on marimbas!) and John Doe of X with Dave Alvin from the BLASTERS on guitar plus the illustrious (in my little world) Chris Desjardins—producer at Slash, filmmaker and cult flick enthusiast and bandleader—on vocals. It's a masterpiece, no track is alike, get it now.

THOR'S HAMMER – *If You Knew: Icelandic Punk & Beat '65-'67* LP (Ugly Pop)
Holy shit, I love this band, it's similar to the ZOMBIES and a bit like LOVE in the later tracks and this is just as good (if not better) at moments. It's proto-punk...it's punk according to the title, so there!

013 – *Takaisin Todellisuuteen* LP & 7" (Svart)
It's incredible how fertile the punk scene was in Finland in the late '70s. I've said this about Finland's NOLLA NOLLA NOLLA and I've noticed the same about their contemporaries 013: at times it sounds like a sort of proto-pop punk. I'm not a fan of pop punk so I think there was a wrong turn taken somewhere but this is mostly super tuneful power pop with perfectly executed, catchy little guitar flourishes.

SHOES THIS HIGH – *Straight to Hell* LP (Siltbreeze)
Totally damaged, reject, not dick-minded enough for art school punk. Scratching, screechy, repetitive to the point of paranoia, SEEMS TWICE, SWELL MAPS, ELECTRIC EELS, BRAINBOMBS territory. Aborted CONTORTIONS. Sold yet? "Cretin Time" is an anthem for the condition we should all occupy. Just listening to this is giving me anxiety shakes right now.

POISON GIRLS – *Hex* 12" (Water Wing)
Under-appreciated Crass records (and beyond) band of teens and early twenty-somethings fronted by a woman of 45, Vi Subversa, a mother of 2 at the time, and also one of the groups' two guitarists. Brilliant and radically feminist and anti-war lyrically and similar to ZOUNDS in terms of English anarcho-punk but with some shredding rockn'roll guitar licks throughout. Vi's kids were in FATAL MICROBES, RUBELLA BALLET and OMEGA TRIBE.

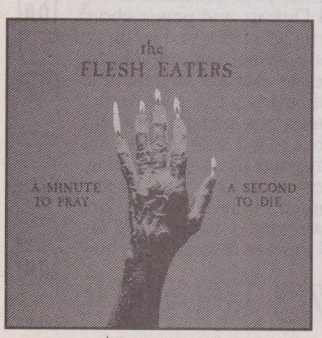
TEN LIVE SHOWS: DYE at the Annex, Austin, TX; PURE DISGUST at Ft. Loko, Washington, DC; BACK TO BACK at Mango's, Houston, TX; WILD CHILD at Seward Café, Minneapolis, MN; LIE at Jane Place, New Orleans, LA; PORKERIA at Mudlark Theatre, New Orleans, LA; HARD DADS at Refuge House, Baltimore, MD; SIN MOTIVO at 1919 Hemphill, Ft. Worth, TX; ULTRALITE at Overhead Door, New Orleans, LA; LUMPY & THE DUMPERS at the Wherehouse, Rock Pile, Paupers, Your Underpants, New Orleans, LA

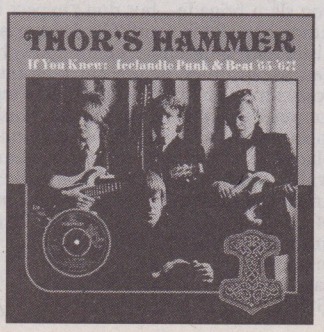
DEMOS/TAPES: BLANK SPELL, PUBLIC ASSAULT, *Cool Bands 2*, LIABLE, CHUD

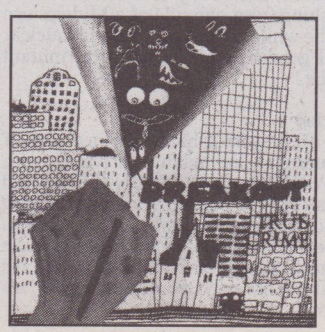
DANIEL LUPTON / Sorry State Records

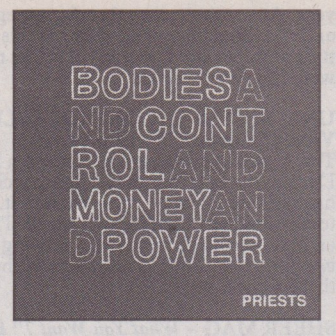
I run Sorry State Records, a label, distro, and record store based out of Raleigh, North Carolina. Running a record store and a big distro like mine means that I get to hear a lot of new stuff. Sometimes that can feel like a bad thing and it's easy to get bummed that so many bands aren't really doing anything new. However, when a truly unique record comes out it stands out all the more. As per usual, I didn't include any of my own releases in my list, but a top ten list without WHATEVER BRAINS, SKEMATA, and BRAIN F≠ is hardly a top ten at all in my book.

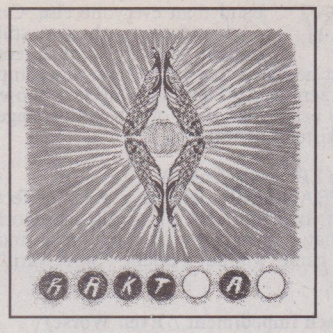
PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical* & *Música Para Gente Fea* 7" EPs (CV)
Undoubtedly my favorite and most listened-to records of 2014, these two 7"s by Vancouver's PURA MANÍA comprise everything I love about punk. Take the intensity of your favorite old international hardcore, wrap it in the killer songwriting of BLITZ at their best, add in the intricate instrumental interplay of my favorite post-punk bands like MAGAZINE, give them a frontman who is actually saying something, and you have a close approximation of the greatness that is PURA MANIIA. Even better, the band is 100% DIY and make me believe in the power of our scene in ways that few other bands and records have in the past few years.

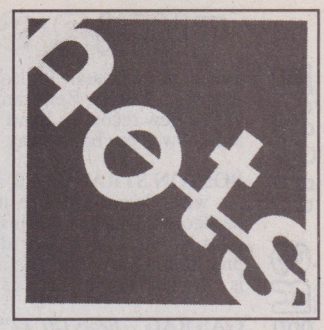












GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
I've loved everything that GOOD THROB put out before this LP, but this is the record where they developed swagger. Songs like "Acid House" and "Dog Food Dick" could have been on their earlier records, but my favorites are the tracks like "No Taste," "Mummy I'm Ugly," and "Double White Denim," which bounce along with a joie de vivre I typically only associate with my old, battered collection of UK punk singles.

FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock)
I played "Punk Is My Boyfriend" for a lot of people this year, and about half of them lost their mind while the other half though it was utter crap. Admittedly, the song is almost absurdly simple, but the performance is straight *fire*, and I can never, ever sit still when I listen to it. Further, it just drips with a completely infectious sense of possibility and passion.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
I have to admit that I kind of hated this record when I first heard it. It felt airtight to the point of being claustrophobic, and (if you can't tell by the other records on my list) I usually like my punk loose and organic. The thing is, though, I think this actually is the grand artistic statement that it purports to be, and all of the rough edges that have been sanded off aren't hiding structural flaws, they're just another sign of the masterful craftsmanship that went into every single aspect of this record.

DiE – *Life Is Hate* & *Vexed* 7" EPs (Sonic Terror)
If you're going to play stripped-down hardcore in this day and age you'd best bring your A game if you're going to stand out from the legions of good-but-not-great bands crowding festival lineups and distro boxes. DiE make the cut with a flawless execution built around meaty riffs, a creepy, slightly askew guitar sound, and perhaps the most powerful vocalist in hardcore.

OBLIVIONATION – *Language of Violence* 12" (Hardware)
Speaking of flawless execution, it's hard to talk about OBLIVIONATION without mentioning John Evicci's legendary drumming, but there's a lot more to love about this record. The songs are almost impossibly dense, cramming riffs inside of riffs that would, in the hands of anyone else, sound like metalcore, but OBLIVIONATION make it sound like perfect hardcore punk.

CROWN COURT – *Trouble from London* CS (Quality Control)
Probably the most authentic-sounding Oi! band out there right now. I'm not really into thuggish street punk but I love melodic Oi!, so I played these three songs to death this year. Pro-tip: get the UK dub of this tape, because the US version kind of sounds like crap.

PRIMETIME – *Tied Down* 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
London ladies writing perfect, catchy punk songs that recall Delta 5 at their very best. "Tied Down" is an anthem for the ages.

IMPALERS – *Psychedelic Snutskallar* 12" (540)
Texas's Impalers make pretty much every other D-beat band obsolete. Who else could write an epic D-beat odyssey like the title track and manage to make it rage the whole way through?

GG KING – *Unending Darkness* LP (Scavenger of Death)
Coming in under the wire at the end of the year, GG King's second LP destroys their already-awesome first full-length. Tightly-wound garage punk collides with black metal atmosphere and a little bit of quirky, irreverent humor, and expert sequencing means that (with the possible exception of the Total Control LP) no other release of 2014 so successfully embodies the "album as journey" simile.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: GLUE – *Enemy* 7" EP (Katorga Works / Video Disease), S.H.I.T. – *Collective Unconsciousness* & *Generation SHIT* 7" EPs (Iron Lung & Lengua Armada), TELEDROME 12" (FDH / P. Trash), PRIESTS – *Bodies and Control and Money and Power* 12" (Don Giovanni / Sister Polygon), ACHTUNGS – *Full of Hate* LP (Going Underground), FLESH WORLD – "A Line in Wet Grass/Not A Soul" 7" (Iron Lung), MYSTIC INANE – *Deep Creep* 7" EP (Negative Jazz), PERSONNEL – *Consumer Electronics* 7" EP (Doubledotdash), PUSRAD – *Errare Humanum Est* 12" (Dead Beat), INSTITUTE – *Salt* 12" (Sacred Bones)

ERIKA ELIZABETH

I'm a post-punk librarian in Portland, Oregon. I book DIY shows at rapidly disappearing all-ages spaces, I'm a contributing editor of the fabulous Dynamite Hemorrhage *print fanzine, and I put together the monthly radio show/podcast* Expressway To Yr Skull.

Compiling year end lists always stresses me out because I'm all too aware of the fact that in any given year, there's so much more great music than I could possibly keep up with, and the idea of imposing some kind of hierarchy on what I did manage to hear seems incredibly restrictive and/or short-sighted when I'll probably discover my new favorite record of the year a few months too late. In an attempt to minimize over-thinking this whole thing and in the spirit of short attention spans, here, in alphabetical order, are ten (non-reissue) singles that came out in 2014 that hit me right in my heart - off-kilter pop, spiky post-punk, snotty garage stompers...

AUSMUTEANTS – Felix Tried to Kill Himself 7" EP (Goodbye Boozy), BRIDGE COLLAPSE – "Wilderness/Blockbreaker" 7" (Crime on the Moon), FLESH WORLD – "A Line in Wet Grass/Not A Soul" 7" (Iron Lung), KING TEARS MORTUARY – Asleep at the Wheel of Fortune 7" EP (Vacant Valley), NOTS – "Fix/Modern" 7" (Goner), PANG – Young Professionals 7" EP (Grazer), PRIMETIME – Tied Down 7" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus), RAKTA – "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada Discos / La Vida Es Un Mus), TRAMPOLINE TEAM – Velveteen Dream 7" EP (Pelican Pow Wow), WIMPS – Party at the Wrong Time 7" EP (Help Yourself)

GREG BENEDETTO / S.H.I.T. / Not Dead Yet

I left 2014 feeling like it was a shit year, but when I reflect on it, that's a bit of nonsense. Finally, against all odds, Toronto has its own punk-run space for shows again and I honestly believe that it is home to one of the biggest and best scenes in North America. S.H.I.T. did a west coast tour & went to London for Static Shock Weekend. For better or for worse, Not Dead Yet was bigger than ever. I guess I shouldn't complain!

Looking outwardly though, I believe hardcore punk has become too fragmented—too many niches and not one cohesive scene. Very few seem critical of their surroundings in a constructive way. Very few seem genuinely angry when there is so much in the world to be angry about. Those are my gripes.

What follows here is really just a list of things that made 2014 better, in no order. Whether 2014 was good for you and where you are, here's to making 2015 better for us all.

12"s:

HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS – *Stay Home!!* LP (Toxic State)
HANK WOOD delivered an excellent LP this year, one of many excellent recordings compliments of Side Two studios. HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS continue to write songs that are so simple and at the same time, strangely complex. Not just that, they prove to be a band that keeps everything completely DIY at an impressive scale—a feat to be admired (and respected) these days.

TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung)
Expectation is that this record graces a number of lists here, as it should. It's thoughtful. It's thought provoking. It's an amalgam of all that can be great about punk music in 2015. "Flesh War" was easily one of my most played tracks of the year. Now if they'd only play another show—though all signs seem to point to never.

RAKTA – 12" (540 / Nada Nada Discos)
RAKTA's LP was another record unlike most everything else going on these days. Best described as psychedelic post-punk, this LP wavers between meandering and charging. "Take Your Time" was a standout track for me. Having the chance to see them three times this year (in three different countries, no less) was pretty damn cool. Easily one of this year's hardest working bands.

WARCRY – *Savage Machinery* LP (self-released)
Maybe it's just me, but there's a bit of a D-beat trend these days. That wouldn't be a problem if all the bands trying to do it were as good as WARCRY. For a long time this band has been so much better at being a hardcore punk

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

band than everyone else. On *Savage Machinery* they are still making powerful and urgent music, as per usual. It also must be noted that I love how this camp releases a record. Zero fanfare, zero hype. They show up to a show, with a new record in hand that's better than most others, get on stage and blow every band away. Consistently setting the bar.

BOSTON STRANGLER – *Fire* LP (self-released)
As with *Primitive* before it, STRANGLER delivers a pitch perfect hardcore LP here. Not just that, their ignorance towards detractors adds to the heat. They do what they want with total focus and precision. One of the best in the game, without a doubt. "Slow Burn" is a wicked album closer as well.

GAS RAG – *Beats Off* 12" (Beach Impediment / Even Worse)
It was no surprise that GAS RAG provided one of the year's best after last year's Demo & "Human Rights" 7". Brutal, raging Mid-West hardcore with some international flare. More of the same from them really - but when "same" means wicked hardcore, more is welcome. Unfortunate to hear that they are now dust, but they burned brightly. Even Worse has a post-humous 7" on offer that I'm sure I'll be jamming by the time this prints.

IMPALERS – *Psychedelic Snutskallar* 12" (540)
IMPALERS wrote a ten-plus minute rager in the vein of late-era CIMEX—the only way they know how. It does not get boring. It rips. For ten-plus minutes. Not to mention they're one of the best live punk bands going these days. Sam Ryser's artwork really completes the package too. Visually, it's a stunner.

ORDEN MUNDIAL – *Obediencia Debida* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
A perfect blend of classic Spanish and Italian hardcore influence. At times manically fast and at others, raging but slow. Just a wild and noisy blast of hardcore fury. Another band on the list delivering an excellent follow-up to a great first LP. Saw them live and gear-related stress only added to the tension. Excellent band.

FARANG – single-sided 12" (Bad Vibrations)
Unique, frantic, intense, and technical like little else this year. FARANG mostly hang around Toronto but consistently provide a live show as if they are touring regularly. This is a record worth tracking down.

INMATES – LP (Painkiller)
A lot of awful shit happened in 2014. Just a banner bad year for the world. Among the bad that happened, I happened to see INMATES play twice and was in no way scared for my life. What the fuck? It used to be that this band brought out the worst in people. I suppose that sometimes these days, punk feels more like a costume party than people genuinely angry about the world and the state its in, so no surprises that a band like INMATES falls under the radar. Bottom line, Cleveland has produced some of the best hardcore the world has seen over the last 25 years. This LP does not fall short on adding to that canon. Seriously angry and mean, this is some genuine caveman hardcore. Japan by way of the midwest. Paul sounds like a demon as usual. Killer artwork by Shaun Filley too. If more bands took cues from INMATES, we'd all be in a better place. Long live Now That's Class. Long live Cleveland.

SOME OTHER EXCELLENT 12"s: GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / White Denim / SuperFi), JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numancia* LP (Beat Generation / La Vida Es Un Mus), THE LOWEST FORM – *Negative Ecstasy* LP (Iron Lung), TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nostros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe), BIG CONTEST – *Time Will Tell* (Mosher's Delight), THE COMBAT ZONE LP (Side Two), VEXX – 12" (Grazer / M'lady's).

7"s:

PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical & Música Para Gente Fea* 7" EPs (CV)
These records were far and away my favorites these year. A real cross-section of individuals coming together in Vancouver to create something absolutely unique. A truly international punk band providing an honest mix of a number of varied influences that is angry and vital in the way good punk music should be. Pure fire. Find these records.

DIE – *Vexed* 7" EP (Sonic Terror)
DIE is one of the best hardcore bands in the world. If you liked their first 7", you need this record. If you don't like their first 7" yet, find it, and listen to it on repeat until you do. "Ready to Rot" is one of the best tracks of the year. Angry and misanthropic, a negative outlook that's warranted this day and age. Someone posited to me this year that there is no value in a band so misanthropic and I couldn't disagree more. One of the best live bands going as well. SSD-beat forever.

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" 7" (Iron Lung)
The A-side to this single is a monster. It plods and swells in a hypnotic manner. Despite the fact that they often get cited as ex-DESTINO FINAL, this band has become so much more than that. Easily top five current hardcore bands, totally unique and in its own world. The message in these lyrics is phenomenal as well. Seeing them live is a moving experience. We drove eighteen hours in two days this summer just to catch them. They're one of the few bands I'd do that for these days.

SHEER MAG – *What You Want* 7" EP (Wilsuns RC)
You won't find much poppy stuff on this list. I can't say I really look for it, but I love it when I come across good stuff and damn if this record isn't near-perfect. Leads for days. Catchy, sing-along melodies—and they deliver on the live front. This band will be poised to take punk by storm in 2015 if they can do it again. We all need to feel good sometimes. Let SHEER MAG be your soundtrack.

RAKTA — "Tudo Que É Sólido/Serpente" 7" (540 / Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Where the LP came very early in the year, this 7" appeared in the middle of RAKTA's three-month North American/European tour, a joint effort from four different labels on three different continents. A bit more dialed in than their LP, these songs might be their best work yet. Excellent packaging to boot.

STEP FORWARD – *Decide* 7" EP (Painkiller)
A ripper. A perfect straightedge hardcore record. Worth the eight-year wait. Nothing more needs to be said.

BIG ZIT – *Electric Zit Vol. 1* 7" EP (Not Normal)
BIG ZIT provided one of the best demos of last year and didn't fail to continue providing some killer hardcore this year. NWI has been a hotbed of hardcore for a while and these guys continue the trend. Very excited to see what they can do next. Live, they are already a force.

INFERNÖH / NOMAD – split 7" EP (Brain Solvent Propaganda)
INFERNÖH has yet to do any wrong. Perfectly recorded, incredibly powerful stuff. They are a band who've yet to do anything less than 10/10. The NOMAD side ended up being their final effort and it delivers as well. Different styles, same spirit, all of it great.

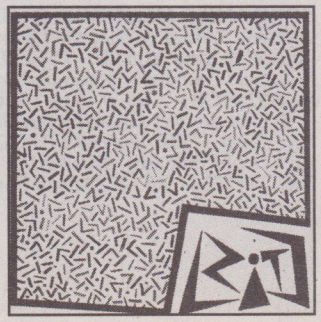
IRON LUNG – *Savagery* 7" EP (Iron Lung)
IRON LUNG is another band that is the best at what they do. *Savagery* picks up right from where *White Glove Test* left off. I suppose we have to call it music, but on this slab it's mostly sonic intimidation. Powerful shit. And when a band achieves "legend" status as they have, it's admirable that they throw us a 7" better than most, seemingly just because they can.

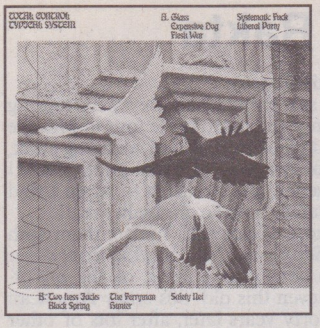
LA MISMA – *Arete* 7" EP (Toxic State)
On their first vinyl effort, LA MISMA successfully made a document of their wild live show. Intense, melodic punk music. Nay kills it in a live setting as well. She took on about 300 people crammed into a loft at NDY this year without skipping a beat.

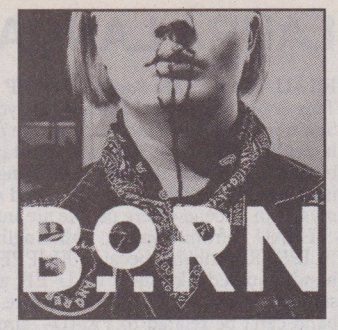
SOME OTHER EXCELLENT 7"s: BLAZING EYE – *No Outside* 7" EP (Overdose), S.H.I. – *Lucifer Rising* 7" EP (Crust War), GLUE – *Enemy* 7" EP (Katorga Works / Video Disease), SAVAGEHEADS – *Wrong Side of the Law* 7" EP (Twerp / X-Ploit), WARTHOG – *Prison* 7" EP (Iron Lung), SUPERCRUSH – "Lifted/Melt Into You" 7" (Bedside / Grave Mistake), SHRAPNEL – *Frenzied State* 7" EP (Triple B / QCHC)

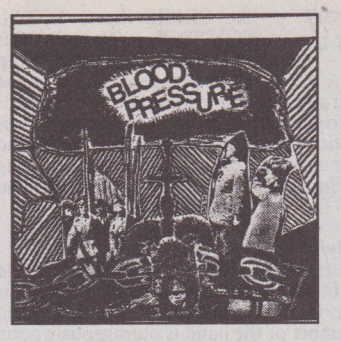
CASSETTES:

TRIAGE – demo CS (Sub//Par)
Maybe I'm biased when I say Toronto has a killer scene these days, but I honestly believe it to be the truth. Lots of youth, lots of diversity, lots of passion. TRIAGE embodies all of it. It's an attempt at Burning Spirits worship that becomes something wholly its own. It's got that unhinged musicianship of people pushing the height of their ability. I cannot wait for TRIAGE to take over hardcore punk in 2015.









BLOOD PRESSURE – demo CS (self-released / Beach Impediment)
Not seeing BLOOD PRESSURE in 2014 was a big let down for me. This demo (subsequently released on 7" by the near-perfect Beach Impediment) is a scorcher. Rock solid, ripping fast hardcore. Few bands deliver on this brand of hardcore these days. BLOOD PRESSURE has it in spades.

MUJERCITOS – demo CS (Sangre Azul)
I missed the boat on a copy of the TERCER MUNDO LP and haven't had a chance to jam the SACRIFICIO 7" all that much, but the Mexico DF/Cintas Pepe crew find their way on the list with this tape. More excellent hardcore from a camp of folks that produce consistently excellent hardcore. This has been stuck in the tape deck for a while.

BLAZING EYE – *East Coast Tour Tape* CS (self-released)
I first caught BLAZING EYE in February by chance after my flight home from the west coast was cancelled. I had the good fortune of seeing them two or three more times following and not once did they disappoint. From what I understand, this is essentially their first 7" on cassette. BLAZING EYE are much bigger than this tape though. Heavily involved in East 7th and intensely focused on bringing unity to Los Angeles, this thing is a marker of an important time for what I think is an important band.

WORLD WAR 4 – *Demo 2014* CS (self-released)
Anyone interested in the late '80s NYHC vibe as far as their hardcore is concerned, should know about this band by now. Another near-perfect effort from members of NO TOLERANCE and FLOORPUNCH.

OTHER EXCELLENT TAPES: V/A – *The Stompilation* CS (Stupid Records), ANXIETY HAMMER – demo CS (Curtain Fire), CHAIN RANK – *Up Against the Wall* CS (self-released), CRAZY SPIRIT – *Demo 2014* (self-released), TOZCOS – *Demo 2014* CS (Overdose), WILD SIDE – demo CS (self-released)

NOTABLE REISSUES: QLOAQA LETAL – *Nunca Siempre* LP (Metadona); ANTI-CIMEX – *Swedish Hardcore 1986-1993* 3xLP (Svart); ALERTA ROJA – *Algo Esta Cambiando…Y Muy Violentamente* LP (Lengua Armada); NYC MAYHEM – *For Real* LP (Radio Raheem); THE FIX – "Vengeance / Jan's Room" 7" (Touch & Go)

TOTAL LIVE DOMINATION:

SOME EXCELLENT LIVE SETS/GIGS FROM THIS YEAR: The aftermath following LUMPY & THE DUMPERS, New York's Alright, NYC; L.O.T.I.O.N. at the Acheron, New York's Alright, NYC; UNA BESTIA INCONTROLABLE, DAWN OF HUMANS, HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS, LA MISMA at 538 Johnson, NYC; GENERACION SUICIDA at Munoz Gym, Bakersfield, CA; BLAZING EYE at Los Globos, Los Angeles, CA; RAKTA, FARANG, GAUCHO, TRIAGE at S.H.I.B.G.B's, Toronto, ON; HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS, DESTRUCTION UNIT at S.H.I.B.G.B's, Toronto, ON; TURNSTILE at Wrongbar, Not Dead Yet, Toronto, ON; LOVE TRIANGLE at T-Chances, Static Shock Weekend, London, UK; CRIATURAS at Township, Residue Records Showcase, Chicago, IL

TOTAL LIVE LOWLIGHT: Not seeing WASTE MANAGEMENT in 2014—the first time in maybe seven years!

JAKE BISON

Jake Bison lives in Olympia, plays in GLOSS, and does the label Total Negativity.

THE WRONG – demo CS (self-released)
Queer nihilist punk criminals from Chicago. Punk as fuck, totally fucked up and ready to burn society and do violence to anybody who tries to rebuild it. Sound-wise, it's like a hardcore punk version of the GRUMPIES or something. Piercing high-pitched vocals, neck-break speed more or less from start to finish with one break for the namesake stomper. Lyrics are a non-stop nihilist assault against society: "*every1 commit a crime / wee're thee useless unfit uglies we never ask why / cross my heArt and hope to die / i wantto bleed stick a needle in my eyes so i can't see / ev-er-y-thing must go)))*" Pretty much anything you could want from punk. True freak shit.

BLOOD PRESSURE – *The Facts* 7" EP (Beach Impediment)
Raging hardcore from Pittsburgh with quick Scandi-style D-beat riffs, US-style straightforward parts, and an overall hard as nails sound. Definitely living alongside GREEN BERET and AJAX sound-wise, BLOOD PRESSURE stands out as being a little weirder and more varied than those bands (probably due to being from Pittsburgh). The 7" contains all three songs from their self-released demo tape and three more recorded in the same session. Just really fucking good hardcore punk. Very excited to hear more.

CRABAPPLE – *Is it You?* CS (self-released)
I think members are scattered around the Bay Area, but I associate this band with San Jose. Which is to say: punks playing indie-pop in the C86/Sarah Records style and doing it as well as anyone ever has. CRABAPPLE picks up from members' former bands SOURPATCH and DEAR MARJE—meaning the tape is packed with catchy hooks, deep-feelings-inducing lyrics, and perfect vocal melodies—while introducing a more bass-driven sound and some fancy guitar work that stands out without being over the top. CRABAPPLE has the sort of cohesive sound that makes you feel like the members hang out a lot. Finally, I need to shout out the ratio of bass-intros to not-bass-intros approaching the level of faux pas. This tape is next level, I'm not sure what this band is doing at the moment but I hope they have some plans for 2015.

BÖRN – 12" EP (PBP)
Dark post-punk/goth/deathrock from Iceland. The CHRISTIAN DEATH influence is strong alongside WIPERS and RUDIMENTARY PENI. I like deathrock enough but most current bands I hear about don't stand out to me in the way this EP has. BORN has influenced me to go deep into the depths of dark post-punk searching for more. The lyrics are in Icelandic but in their own words: "Our record is mostly about feminism and body image. It's about taking control of your own body and your own identity." They'll be doing a full US tour in the spring, so keep your eyes peeled!

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Band from London playing dancey post-punk with an emphasis on punk. Bitingly sarcastic lyrics poking fun at punk and society in general—at times unleashing real unmasked vitriol—delivered with snottiness worthy of any classic UK punk. Not sure what else to say, just listen to it if you are a punk.

LEATHER DADDY – *Sob Story* CS (Twerps)
Second tape release from my current favorite Boston hardcore band. Leather Daddy plays mid-tempo meat and potatoes hardcore with a strong punk edge to it. The vocals especially feel worked on, catchy and well-placed with a lot of memorable lyrical "hooks," a breath of fresh air in hardcore right now where vocals often sound phoned in, boring, and unclever. Nothing on the tape feels like filler and everything stands out as sounding original (in a pretty boring hardcore climate) while still sounding classic. They have a 7" coming out very soon!

BAJA BLATZ – demo CS (self-released)
Total shit punk pogo attack from Boston. Fast, fucked up, and catchy with some of the most standout vocals I've heard on a punk record in a long time. Real punk played by real punks who don't take themselves too seriously but still want you to know they give a shit. Again GRUMPIES and the BANANAS come to mind, fused with East Coast pogo and street punk-sounding shit and a huge dose of snottiness. BAJA BLATZ had an expiration date of Summer 2014 from the moment they were born so if you missed it you're fucked! I've heard rumors that the tape will at least be released as a 7" in the near future.

CONGRATULATIONS – CS (self-released)
CONGRATULATIONS is a semi-defunct punks-playing-indie rock band from Boston that sounds like an echoey, blown-out version of SUPERCHUNK drowning in feedback. I listened to this tape at work and my boss asked me if I was listening to SUPERCHUNK. The tape was recorded in a studio and then run through a shitty practice amp, and has non-stop dual vocals (which you may not have noticed if I didn't tell you but now you will think it sounds really cool). The songs are written by a person named Josh who has played in a million bands in Boston and New Jersey with good names like SERIOUS GENIUSES, REAL GOOD, COOL SHIRT, LANDLINE, and DON'T and he delivers as usual with perfect indie licks and memorable lyrical content, asking hard-hitting existential questions like "is this what I wanna do?" and "is there somewhere I'm supposed to be?"

INSTITUTE – *Salt* 12" (Sacred Bones)
Probably in quite a few lists so I wont say too much. Second 2014 release from this relatively new but very active Austin band. Deranged bass-driven punk shit sorta

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

like CRISIS meets TOTAL CONTROL. Though this record goes a bit deeper into the abyss of insanity than the previous records even did, with some cough/crying and what sounds like the vocalist having a bad trip in a loud room, it still more or less sticks to the script of the previous two records, which is not a bad thing. Definitely one of the best and most original punk bands playing today. I'm sure they will be touring plenty in 2015—make sure you get out for it.

VEXX – 12" (Grazer / M'lady's)
If this wasn't released in 2014, it was at least reissued in 2014. Weirdo rock and roll from Olympia with a strong '70s punk influence. Guitar and general vibe sometimes brings BAD BRAINS to mind. Its kind of fucked up that like every member of the band is outrageously good at what they do. On top of that it feels pretty rare that a band really sounds nothing like any other band existing. There's a refreshing disregard for what's hip here. It has the feel of early punk when people didn't know what the "thing to do" was yet and just played like their freaky true selves. One of the most powerful bands I've seen to boot. They've got a 7" coming out on Katorga Works any day now.

JASON RIGAS

Top ten shows of 2014.

[NYE] NO STATIK, PERFECT PUSSY, NOMAD, LA MISMA, GRUDGES at Acheron in Brooklyn, NY
Rang in the New Year the right way with the truest punx in town!

[12 January] SAD BOYS, RAZORHEADS, DAMAGES, EXECUTOR at Ray Cappo's Cantina in New Brunswick, NJ
Perfect NB, NJ night. A great intimate house show for SAD BOYS followed by late-nite eats at Cinco de Mayo!

[18 March] LA MISMA, SECRET PROSTITUTES, TURBOKRIEG, AGONIA at Knockout in San Francisco, CA
DJ Up-Yer-Rash made my night spinning the best UK82 jams. Hard to say goodbye to the Bay after this one.

[19 April] BLAZING EYE, NOMAD, INMATES, NO, PLEASURE INDUSTRY at ABC No Rio in New York, NY
An excellent LES afternoon and my first time seeing LA's finest. The poison controls your life!

[21 June] HERATŸS at Ungdomshuset in Copenhagen, Denmark
A much-anticipated raucous performance at K-Town HC Fest. Most impressive DIY space and punk town I've ever been to.

[9 July] CUT OFF, JAGERNAUT, INHUMAN POISON, LOXA, HORNY BITCHES (ugh) at Prapopoulou Squat in Halandri, Greece
Dusty mucous, sweaty shorts, and blastbeats galore at this midsummer rager. There was a horse in attendance.

[7 September] PUNCH, CURMUDGEON, WATER TORTURE, CRUSHED at Death By Audio, in Brooklyn, NY
A heartfelt farewell to DBA for me, with the most brootal bands I saw all year. Thanks again Jake and Vanessa!

[26 October] BLAZING EYE, DAWN OF HUMANS, HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS, SURVIVAL, DRUNKEN RAMPAGE, DISCHAKA at Tompkins Square Park in New York, NY
Ten years after Leftöver Crack started a riot, a calm and cloudy afternoon in the punkest park on earth watching great bands and drinking strawberry egg creams.

[31 October] HORROR VACUI, VIVID SEKT, CRIMSON SCARLET, 2084, RECKLESS at the Night Light in Oakland, CA
Halloween on Broadway watching the scraper bikes go by. I pogo'd hella hard in my dorky North Face when Vivid Sekt covered "Summer of '81."

[1 November] FORWARD, LONG KNIFE, THE LIGHT, ISOTOPE at the Hemlock in San Francisco, CA
A-bu-so-ru-to-ri amazing! Long live Burning Spirits!

LAURA LANÇA / Rakta

FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock)
This is the best record I heard this year. I saw them when they were touring Spain in 2013, and since then I have not only witnessed these four impressive ladies kick everybody's ass with this raw and crooked, lopsided, amazing punk, but I noticed that they were building their own way to make punk. FRAU is definitely the most consistent and energetic music to listen to when I find myself in a scene where people are intimidated to make originality real.

FRAU is from London, half English and half Spanish. I relate them with FLIPPER, probably because FLIPPER's *Sex Bomb* 7" EP has the front cover hand stamped like the FRAU EP, and probably as a result of the out-of-standard music that they both create. But even this old '80s crazy American band can't be related to FRAU—almost forty years later, after lots of other bands trying to imitate each other, FRAU focused their forces on the oddity of just making punk. No rules, no consent.

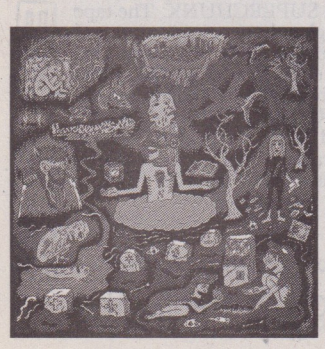
Highlight is the song "Punk is my Boyfriend," but no more than any other. The following songs, "Snakeskin" and "Orca," with the eerie guitar riffs and the sequacious bass lines assisted with the solid drums, take over with the help of grisly screams that express deep lyrics that you should look up what they mean. Highest recommendation.

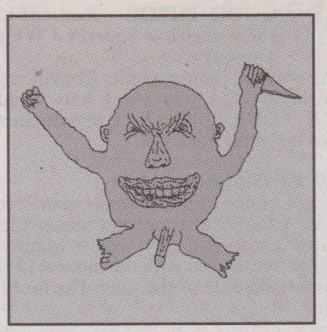
PIÑEN – *Aborto Sonoro* CS (self-released)
Based in Barcelona, PIÑEN definitely make me think that punk is still alive for me. When I heard their demo tape on the internet I got so stoked from the first second. Listening to songs like "Marginación" and "Mujer," you can see perfectly what they are digging for. Their raw yet heavy drums, and the fast and hypnotic guitars take you to the angry and radical vocals, that mean more than is simply audible. The demo tape was recorded over old Spanish band tapes and the front cover is adorned by a very dirty and ugly drawing, which is nice because it shows exactly the kind of subversive and primitive punk that is already lost—but they affirm they will never surrender. Made by themselves: there's no better way to make.

SIEGA – *Demo* CS (Discos Enfermos)
As with very old American hardcore, with bands such as VOID, SIEGA from Barcelona became instantly classic, but the difference is because the band is basically made up of women, except for the drummer. Some heavy chords in songs such as "Conditioned" have few touches of CRO-MAGS' *Age of Quarrel* LP and I can't deny that I miss bands like those nowadays. Currently you can find new bands that identify with this '80s American hardcore style, more often in the US and maybe South America, such as '90s bands SELF CONVICTION and maybe POINT OF NO RETURN. However, despite the fact that this sort of music is almost dominated by a macho membership, SIEGA intentionally deliberate this concept, and with songs such as "Forced Anxiety," they express the intimidation felt by a woman in this macho society; they correct the term and also destroy this assumed role that woman can't make hardcore. Anyway, listening to SIEGA gives to you, as a woman, the empowerment of fitting yourself wherever you want. Fuck yeah.

RES – *Aquestes Nits* CS (Discos Enfermos)
2014 for me was a complete mess, but definitely the most intense year of my life so far. I've been at my friends' side almost all the time, but instead of feeling safe and aided, I felt very isolated from everything and alone. When I discovered RES, it was in the most critical time of 2014. I was working fifteen hours a day, planning trips, tours...No time for hope. But I think it's when you are in these "not so pleasant" moments that you find great things that can help cheer you up. The new Barcelona "polk" punk band RES gave me this chance. The echoing vocals and the delicious, sterling yet melancholic and insistent guitar riffs take you to another atmospheric place. Besides listening to Catalan and searching on Google translator for what they are saying, it makes it more interesting, not just for the sound, but definitely to understand their meaning. This tape has a very nice silkscreened cover designed by one of the members, and you can check out the lyrics if you have the same curiosity as I do.

JUANITA Y LOS FEOS – *Nueva Numancia* LP (Beat Generation / La Vida Es Un Mus)
This Madrid band connects with me in so many different ways. Her voice and the reverbed guitar unify my favorite elements in music into one. It reminds me of some of the *Pebbles* compilations of '60s garage bands, but with the anger and sweetness that JUANITA Y LOS FEOS discovered for themselves. But don't fool yourself when you listen to her high yet melodic voice, thinking that they talk about happiness and good things—far from it. Sorrow, melancholy,





and ill-fated society are just some of the coarse themes that the suitable, blessed voice brings to every song in *Nueva Numancia* LP. Listening to songs like "Cien Puñaladas," I think of some old power pop bands, such as EXPLODING HEARTS' *Guitar Romantic* LP and I fling my whole body around while I enjoy every riff the guitar plays. Not forgetting that the front cover expresses perfectly what I said before: the irony of kidding deep, obscure lyrics in a sassy voice, with catchy rhythms made by the synth and bass.

TAULARD – *Les Abords du Lycée* LP (Mon Cul C'est du Tofu / self-released)
Looking at this wave of synth/minimal wave that is going on in punk this last year, TAULARD from Grenoble, France do it in the most interesting way. Thinking about French pop minimal bands in the '80s, I can easily compare TAULARD to TURQUOISE DAYS, but the difference is that they get out of the minimal and cold wave standard and go further, doing it heavy and simple in the same way. Especially when you hear people singing in French, a language that isn't used much in songs by people who don't speak it properly or aren't used to hearing it, especially in punk. So nice to hear French lyrics, so nice to hear different languages and not always English...

They use long verses to express their concepts—that also bring to mind some hip-hop influences—that, even if there is no musical connection, the idea is to express political beliefs and/or thoughts, so they go down exactly the same path as DEAD PREZ and maybe IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE. The record has a very beautiful front cover that has been badly silkscreened, but this is not a problem; I like when you look at things people create but they don't look so perfect.

S.H.I.T. – *Generation Shit* 7" EP (Lengua Armada)
Directly from Toronto, Canada, these five powerful and obsessive Canadian guys recreate the Japanese hardcore punk recipe in their own style, right now in 2014. I could rather assign them straight to hardcore—and this is exactly what was supposed to happen before listening to this new EP—but their punk attitude in their lyrics and definitely in the catchy drums on songs like "Eraser II" and "Mockery," let me think that "hardcore punk" is the best definition that they can have, as opposed to just "hardcore" or "punk." The song that claims the EP name, "Generation Shit," captures my attention with elements that remind me of the beginning of AGNOSTIC FRONT's *Cause for Alarm* LP, but this is just my impression. Savage vocals with delay effects is something that you can hear a bunch of times in many, many different bands around the world, but you can't see that often bands like S.H.I.T. mix such usual and primitive things in punk and make them better!

GATTOPARDO – LP (Burka for Everybody / Nada Nada)
This very nice recording from GATTOPARDO, a post-punk Brazilian band from São Paulo, who just put out a LP with some old songs from their demo tape, which didn't have such a good recording. After waiting for so long to have this record, finally I can listen to one of my favorites records of 2014. I can't whittle down the fact that their post-punk reminds me of some golden eras in Brazil in the '80s, that some bands such as LEGIÃO URBANA and FELLINI perfectly started. Yet more than that, GATTOPARDO don't just make it the right way, the poetry and political thoughts in their lyrics also introduce me to the deepness of saying things about our daily living, and caring about more than just pretty music. The strong basslines lead the songs to the melodic guitars, that bring the brilliant, noisy delay that floods everything. Also, the tribal drums in "Hora do Lobo" shows you that garage is also in their language. "Retro" is my favorite song, but the last one, "Jornada Nortuna," with the melancholic vocals, take you on a space trip with GATTOPARDO. Also this song has a video-clip that you can easily find online.

D.H.K – *Extinción* 7" EP (Hysteria)
Peru has showed up again with this destructive EP. After their amazing LP *La Krudeza No Muere* they present themselves now with five very heavy yet distorted and massive songs that compress your head down. If you are a punk, and not a fashion bullshit punk, you can find a part of yourself in everything they are screaming here. DESTRUYE, HUYE, KREA are warm-blooded DISCHARGE enthusiasts, whose recent bands such as REALIDAD and ASESINATO DEL PODER are sweating to bring it back to the *punkqui* lonely hearts. Maybe the "Extinción" song is the only one that doesn't convince me that much, but especially "Por Ke Soy Punk" brings me the passion that I felt when I was just a little baby. "I just want to be myself," I said when I was little, and I keep saying so even today. *Por ke soy punk!!!*

PURA MANÍA – *La Estafa Musical* 7" EP (CV)
I wish I could have listened to more recent bands like this in 2014. After HARD SKIN, who brought you that No Future record from '80s England with a very good touch of fun, PURA MANÍA deliver the nice energy that—why not?—Oi! cheer can bring to you. The lead song "Estafa Musical" states their anger clear and detailed. The vocals takes you to the emotion is to sing along in your room, wishing they could play right next to your house to enjoy them. The song "Sospechoso" reminds me almost of BLITZ's post-punk phase but, furthermore, it is the Oi! rhythm that stays; because this is where they come from and belong. Why is Canada so far?

PACO MUS / La Vida Es Un Mus

Another year-another Top 10. Not much to say really, it feels like I've been doing this Top 10 thing for far too long and I always say exactly the same thing. So I'll keep it short and sweet. 2014, best year for Punk in UK since I moved here. Proud of being part of it. Top 10 in order.

TERCER MUNDO – *Ser Nosotros Mismos* 12" (Cintas Pepe)
I loved the TERCER MUNDO single in 2013. I think that as far as punk with a clear message went, they were totally on point. They had something serious to say and they said it, even if most people thought they were trying to shock or playing it cool. A year went by and they released a full-length which sounds less abrasive that their debut, still low-fi and cheaply recorded but with more memorable songs. Mexican punks without much regard for production values but with things to say about what goes on around them, mostly singing in the first person and carrying the torch of change that I want to think is sweeping Mexico these days.

S.H.I.T. – *Collective Unconsciousness* 7" EP (Iron Lung)
S.H.I.T. – *Generation Shit* 7" EP (Lengua Armada)
S.H.I.T. – "Feeding Time/Private Lies" 7" (Static Shock)
Simply put, S.H.I.T. is the best *hardcore* band in North America right now. Releasing three killer singles in a year is proof enough, I reckon. They are punk as fuck and somehow it seems churning out slice after slice of perfect punk is effortless to them. Any of the above records will stand their ground on their own but the three together are a brave statement of intent.

ABORTICIDIO – 時々私は死ぬしたい7" EP (General Speech)
Absolutely nonsensical ugly noise from Mexico City. There is no production at all in this piece of musical garbage. The artwork is disgustingly confusing, the music is as primal and raw as it gets, with a guitar tone which could have been taken straight from the Z flexi, and the whole thing reeks of an inside joke. All my favorite ingredients. It put a smile on my face when I got it months ago and now replaying this turd of a record I smile even more.

VERONICA FALLS – "Nobody There/I Need You Around" 7" (Beachy Head)
I find it hard to believe that I went from praising a Mexican shit-sounding record to this beautiful piece of music. The day I got this single in the mail I played the A-side over twenty times in a row. That is not a figure of speech, it is the truth. Perfectly crafted pop from a band that has yet to write a bad song.

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "Nou Món/Cinturons, Genolis, Vidres I Cossos" 7" (Iron Lung)
If I hadn't released the UNA BESTIA INCONTROLABLE LP it would have been my *top* record of last year—luckily I can put them here this year. UNA BESTIA INCONTROLABLE work hard trying to write punk songs which don't sound punk at all. They managed to do just that in this single, with a weird mix of industrially tinted bass driven non-hardcore anthems. The beat on the A-side is dysfunctional to an unsettling point, their sound is massively damaging and the whole vibe of both the record and the band proves that they are on their own wave. Weird noises which sound like no one else.

PIG DNA – *Control You Fucker #3* 7" EP (Nightrider)
In theory I shouldn't like bands like this anymore. In reality, listening to PIG DNA tapes, seeing them live and then playing this record made me immediately their #2 Fan. Weird sect-like vibes mixing of ZOUO, CONFUSE, CHARLES MANSON, and THROBBING GRISTLE. Looking forward to see more deconstruction of DISCHARGE.

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Bunch of overeducated morons playing moron punk. Convincing, catchy, and nonsensical in a UK79 kinda way via a lefty Leeds trip. Like listening to GANG OF FOUR fronted by a female Steve Ignorant had CRASS not crossed his path. Fuck Off.

FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock)
Probably the most active band in London. Fierce female hardcore-punk. They could remind you of CRASS at times but surely they stick to the school of there-is-no-right-way-to-play with a minimal guitar presence which can be wildly free, mixed with the tightest D+B combo and the angriest frontwoman this side of the river. The more I see this band the more I like them.

IMPALERS – *Psychedelic Snutskallar* 12" EP (540)
We need to talk about D-beat. What are we gonna do with it? What was something fresh (for five minutes, I know) turned into a joke by hordes of people armed with computers, Facebook accounts, Tumblrs, and no imagination? Copying the copy and producing an endless trail of black and white caricatures of what once was something I liked. Thankfully there are still bands which can surprise and play perfect hardcore with their boots heavily rooted in the D-beat camp while being progressive in their own ways. IMPALERS are at the forefront of that fight. I love the way this record sounds, looks, and feels. I wish more bands made me feel the way I feel while playing the SKITSLICKERS 7" (The greatest hardcore 7" ever recorded. Quote me on that.) and somehow IMPALERS may be that band.

MEN OH PAUSE – *Pulse Check* 7" EP (Tuff Enuff)
Few records in the last years have captured the minimalist claustrophobia which first dragged me towards that monster known as DIY music as well as this 7" does. Tense, anxious, naive amateur music which feels so damn natural and fresh. MEN OH PAUSE, three women from Sussex armed with keyboard, bass and drums ticked all those boxes. At times sounding like they can't hold the tension they created and at times sounding like a band falling down stairs, MEN OH PAUSE wrote what may be one of the best DIY singles outside the golden era of the genre. To top it off the artwork of the record is perfectly fitting. 10/10.

RALPH RIVERA / Not Normal

Disclaimer: Not Normal does not now, nor has it ever, endorsed nostalgia. Instead of celebrating the most mind-melting, ass-shaking, senses-shattering tunes imaginable, Top Ten lists are far too often a way for the compilers to reminisce over a period they probably just complained about the whole time it was happening. What is now has always been, will always be. What never was will languish in dollar-bin perdition. Don't look too far into this list. For every one of these ten(ish) releases, there are fifty more equally engaging ones that I haven't heard or experienced yet, that no one's talking about because they're from Paducah, KY or they challenge the prevailing "hardcore is for angry, white dudes" narrative. Find and support them. It was easy, it was cheap, do the mutant shuffle, you fucks!

ANIMAL LOVER – *Guilt* LP (Learning Curve)
I'm told that ANIMAL LOVER actually plays Noise Rock, but, truthfully, I don't know what that is. The myriad images that term conjures in my brain forms a flip book of aging hipsters with too many pedals on their board hoping someone notices, or perhaps doesn't, their unrequited love for Boyd Rice and that description would have sent me right back to the first DICKS LP if I wasn't already familiar with these Minnesotan freaks' previous output. As it turns out, one person's Noise Rock sounds to these ears like the first DIE KRUEZEN LP gnarled and stretched and repackaged as NO TREND'S *Too Many Humans*. Uncomfortable, claustrophobic, devastating music for morons.

CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol, Live At The Woodmar Deli, & Canadian Cone* CSs (self-released)
I'd call CONEHEADS perfect if I felt that's what they were after, rather than being content with spitting at that description and sardonically laughing at those still pursuing it. True Believers, CONEHEADS just is.

CCTV – "Mind-Control" and "Le Jom" tracks on *Cool Bands 2* (self-released)
For most of two-oh-one-four, unless you were a landlord looking to outfit your properties with the latest in high-tech video surveillance, your searches for CCTV came up bupkis; to be sure, with only a few tracks on a comp that sounds more like your parents' senior year mixtape as opposed to the essential NWI punk primer that it is, you'd be forgiven for thinking they're something of an urban legend. However, those with the tenacity and perseverance to see the search through were rewarded with these two choice cuts, which channel equally, yet never emulate, the art-damaged new wave of the SUBURBAN LAWNS, the petulant brattiness of the Dangerhouse catalog, and the morbid ramblings of the SONICS and HUMAN EXPRESSION.

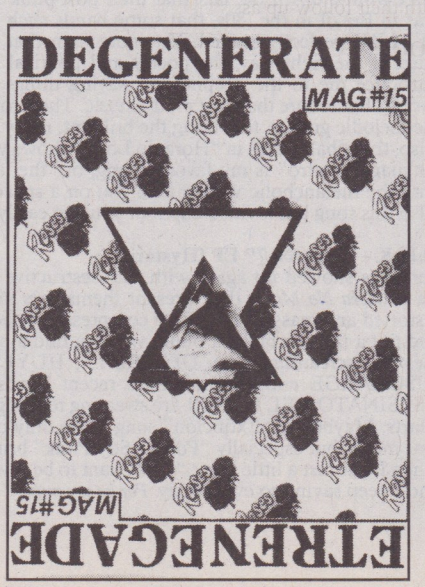
DEFORMITY – *Fracture* 7" EP (Katorga Works / Toxic State)
The major shortcoming of year-end Top Ten lists is that everyone starts them in the middle of December. Though unfortunately for the gracious coordinators of this here punk rag, I waited until the day before this shit was due and was able to squeeze in Deformity's latest EP. Of all the releases I've listed, this was my most anticipated rekkid of 2014. I stopped eating, I stopped sleeping. Waste expulsion became a secondary concern and hygiene, tertiary, but True Believers, this swirling, caterwauling, psychedelic monstrosity was worth every minute. It's a rare outfit that consistently manages, let alone tries, to outdo its last demonstration of power, rarer still one that writes and scraps seven flawless songs just to prove that ability, but Deformity is that band.

HYSTERICS – *Can't I Live?* 7" EP (M'lady's)
Confession: I almost forgot about this record because it came out in January. That was literally a year ago, I'm only human, and Chicago was a frozen tundra hellscape at the time, so wipe that judgmental sneer off your face. Although now kaput, Olympia's HYSTERICS first managed to eclipse their already stellar 2011 debut in every way, all the while retaining that ol' "both sides of the FAITH/VOID split being played at the same time" quality that attracted me to the band from the outset. RIP.

NERV – *USA Off Earth Now!* 7" EP (Lagerville)
The Midwest sucks. I know everybody's obligated to insist that their hometown sucks, but most of you assholes don't know how good you have it. You have culture, you have monuments, landmarks, sites-for-seeing; people want to visit as opposed to pass through you. We have corn and snow in August. Iowa City's NERV is the result of twenty-plus years of the kind of alienation, desperation, and boredom such citizenship ensures, the kind of shit you fleetingly escape by using the selfsame mocking, sardonic tone your parents forbade whilst playing riffs that sear your fingerprints clean off. NERV is the sound of Middle America collapsing.

PURA MANÍA – *Música Para Gente Fea* & *La Estafa Musical* 7" EPs (CV)
At some point, we have to admit that no one actually likes Oi!. Now, now, don't quit biccing your head and get all "Bollocks, mate!" on me, just consider this earnest query: Why else would stupid Americans lavish their aural attentions on the affected dogshit of white Philosophy majors with one too many RAC records in their collection, when they could instead redirect their earholes towards the sonic slime dripping down from the north? Eschewing the silly posturing most frequently associated with the genre, PURA MANÍA served up two flawless slabs of catchy, melodic, yet still wholly intimidating, Oi!-influenced punk for an ugly world.

TEEN FREAK – demo CS (Rat King)
Look, I know you absolutely love HUFFING glue now, but remember how much guff ya gave to all the paste EATERS in elementary school? Well, they started a band and this is it.



VEXX – 12" (Grazer / M'lady's)
I'm a loudmouth with big, loud opinions, this is the legacy left me by the convergence of two separate, loudmouthed, big-opinioned lines, and it takes something incredibly powerful to leave me speechless. VEXX is that something and even after six months of constant rotation, I can't pin them down. Their talent is effortless, yet deliberate; their sound is familiar, but never derivative. A flawless composite of five millennia of rock'n'roll, they're garage-y without the "college kid just discovering denim" kinda vibe, psychedelic like they locked themselves up with hallucinogenics and old *Highs In The Mid Sixties* comps. The traditional kind of psychedelic, ya dig? And yet, there's that same, remarkably '90's flavor that all Northwestern bands have and they really are just a fucking punk band, so maybe I should leave the dissection of an impossibly perfect record to those with an interest in such things and just flip the record again.

THE WRONG – demo CS (self-released)
While every yahoo with a pedal board has been subjecting us to their mature (pronounced muh-TOUR) take on punk for some time now, these freaks brandished the rally cry of "I Don't Wanna!" and distilled the genre back to its most primal manifestation: short, fast, loud, and hilariously smart. If that sounds wrong, then what is right?

Thanks: Grace, for accommodating and forgiving my inexcusable disdain for deadlines and for asking me to take part in this. The bands included on this list, the releases omitted due to conflict of interest (American Hate, Big Crux, Big Zit, Gas Rag, Ooze, Permanent Ruin), and everyone that makes this world a less boring, more tolerable place.
No Thanks: The Human Turd.

RICH EVANS / Total Punk

Four years of running Total Punk means four years of handstamping record covers late into the night. Here is a list of the ten non-Total Punk releases I listened to the most while stamping my life away

GG KING – *Unending Darkness* LP (Scavenger of Death)
Most well-constructed punk record I've heard in a long time and hands down my favorite release of the year. Ryan King's production is ace.

MANATEEES – *Sit N Spin* LP (Pelican Pow Wow)
I waited nearly a year to hear a recorded version of "Just A Viking" and it was well worth the wait. Menacing, hateful, and absolutely crushing. Late night record of choice, which explains why I've already worn skips into it.

CONEHEADS – *Total Conetrol* CS (self-released)
This thing came out of nowhere and totally blew me away. Weird spastic punk from what looks to be a bunch of fifteen-year-olds.

PREDATOR – *The Complete Earth* LP (Scavenger of Death)
Another one from Atlanta, and another one with Ryan Bell at the knobs. Methodical, pummeling, mid-tempo punk done to perfection.

AUSMUTEANTS – *Split Personalities* LP (Saturno)
Order of Operation was great, but *Split Personalities* ruled the turntable.

LUMPY & THE DUMPERS – *Collection* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / Space Ritual)
2014 was the year of the Lump. Great having all the singles on one piece of wax for extended listening

SLUGGA – CS (Muckman)
Got to see SLUGGA live several times in 2014, and every time they killed it. The tape is no exception. Seven tracks of ghoulish hardcore thuggery.

GINO & THE GOONS – *Shake It!* LP (Slovenly)
Fellow Floridians and world class party starters the GOONS don't disappoint with their follow-up ass shaker.

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim)
Angry abrasive post-punk with one of the best vocalists I've heard in quite some time.

ELECTRIC EELS – *Die Electric Eels* LP (Superior Viaduct)
So great to see so much EELS stuff reissued last year. Some of the best mutant punk muck ever created.

SAM LEFEBVRE

I'm the music editor of the East Bay Express, *parasite at* Maximum Rocknroll, *occasional publisher of* Degenerate *mag, and vocational writer who regularly betrays punk by covering it in venture capital funded, ad revenue dependent, and tightly edited publications.*

Every list I compiled in the last month begins with an apology. I've made lists out of guilt over the shortcomings of other lists. I made genre-inclusive ones, format-ambivalent ones, and toiled in futility to ensure that nothing crucial was omitted. After all of that, the constraints of Maximum Rocknroll's *coverage are relieving. This reflects nothing more than the punk and hardcore part of my listening habits in 2014, it's not really organized like a list, and it's barely about music.*

GOOD THROB – *Fuck Off* LP (Sabermetric / SuperFi / White Denim) was simply destined for this year-in-review column, according to a tarot reader who also explained that I have the book in my lap. I needn't read it. I needn't even open it, because I know it.

A quote: "**[BURNT SKULL – *Sewer Birth* LP (12XU)]** even trumps *itself*—the Austin act's debut sounds more severe than its band name and album title suggests." I wrote that. Actually I changed a word. A moment ago I Googled "Sam Lefebvre Top Ten Albums of 2014" to locate that sentence online and noticed for the first time a little edit on the final published copy. I'm declining to indicate my change in this particular quote (i.e. consider my journalist integrity ravaged).

NUDES – *Stain* EP (Iron Lung) is filed next to me, so I'm going to look up its title on my phone right now.

I was so enthusiastic about **IVY's 12" (Katorga Works)** that in my wordy review for a column called "Red Asphalt"—two installments of which appeared on a short-lived wondrous-sounding website and a third is being chopped-and-screwed for eventual rejection—I apparently made such little sense that the band actually thought I hated it (I could've taken the other position: "Do you need me to write, 'It's fucking sick?'")

About **VEXX – 12" EP (Grazer / M'lady's)**—it's fucking sick.

In regards to **SHEER MAG – *What You Want* 7" EP (Wilsuns RC),** people from Philadelphia are always like, "No one knows those people," oozing with insider hostility.

I don't know the people behind **LUMPY & THE DUMPERS – *Collection* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / Space Ritual)** and it's more fun that way. *{0o0o0o~*the author is dead*~0o0o0}*

I booked a generator show for the guys who play on **PREGNANCY SCARES – *Mind Control* 7" EP (Deranged)** and tumbl'd the flyer a bunch. It was a good crowd and they bought lots of merch. We just posted up on the couch at my place after watching *Burst City*. It was rad, super mellow, and I wasn't really doing anything so the next day I just got in the van. It worked out because I ended up booking a last minute show in Tijuana to avoid taking a night off in sleepy San Diego. The PREGNANCY SCARES dudes were cool enough to haul some of my zines out to Europe, since the guy who distros 'em for me in Germany booked some of their shows. The new record is great, plus they're just really good guys.

My band is composing a politically sensible but emotionally confusing polyamorist counterpoint to **FRAU – *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7" EP (Static Shock).** Furthermore, it raises an issue about whether personifying punk as a romantic interest is actually symptomatic of a subculture under the duress of late capitalism, since discussions of genre are increasingly about marketing, but we're struggling to problematize the matter with sufficient nuance in song.

I'm usually the one discouraging blanket dismissal of the music criticism climate, but I felt pretty disappointed by reviews of **TOTAL CONTROL – *Typical System* LP (Iron Lung).** Perhaps more than ever, we're faced with records that revere particular influences and yet evade mere pastiche. Critics seem to have cycled through novel ways to express as much, so we're left with inconsequential inversions of the sentiment like, "Which is to say: Total Control have their own rules."

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR MONTHLY TOP TENS AND SEND YOUR RECORDS FOR REVIEW CONSIDERATION TO

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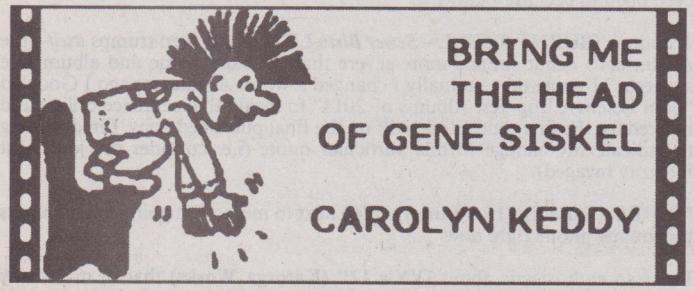
OTHER FUCKERS HAVE THEIR SAY

MOVIES



It is that time of the year when I, the President of the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™, release our list of best films of 2014. Making these "best of" lists is a bunch of bullshit, but who am I to deny anyone including myself this pointless annual ritual?
Here are the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™ best films of 2014.

We Are The Best
Set in Sweden in 1982, this is the story of two female punks who start a band in order to piss off the older metalheads at the local youth center. The girls find a loophole that gets them the practice space instead of the boys. They recruit a classical guitar playing loner at their school to complete the band. It so perfectly captures being a young woman feeling out of place at school and thus in society as they know it. They survive the criticism, family embarrassments and the opposite sex through their camaraderie. I wish this movie was around when I was a young punk. (magpictures.com/wearethebest)

Goodbye To Language 3D
The thing I enjoy most about Jean-Luc Godard's attempt at a 3D movie is that obnoxiousness of it. A director who makes non-linear films where the viewer is bombarded by dialogue should probably be the last person to make a 3D film. Of course, that is also why he should. Godard uses the 3D form to create an illusion while also breaking that illusion. My favorite scene occurs when the two characters are on screen together and one walks away. The 3D effect separates with one part following one character and the other part staying on the other one, superimposing the now separate scenes on top of each other. The effect is jarring, but once you get used to it is seems rather brilliant. (goodbyetolanguage3d.com)

Jodorowsky's Dune
This is the ultimate film that never was. Film director Alejandro Jodorowsky talks a good game. His plans for making a film version of **Dune** seem so completely over the top you can't help but wish this madman was allowed to follow his vision to fruition. He assembled a creative team for **Dune** that would eventually go on to make **Alien**. He also set up a cast that included Salvador Dali, Orson Welles and Mick Jagger. Jodorowsky had storyboarded the entire film in an amazing book of which some scenes have been animated for this film. It's just a glimpse of what could have been. If only. (jodorowskysdune.com)

Hardcore Norfolk
This is the surprisingly interesting story of the music scene in Norfolk, Virginia from the 1950s to the present. If you can only think of two bands from the area, you will as surprised as I was at the history and the development of the Norfolk sound. The thing that really sells the story is the enthusiasm of the people. Musicians and fans lay out the story band by band in a way that revels in the town's underdog status. They wouldn't have it any other way and I am glad for it. (hardcorenorfolk.com)

The Wrecking Crew
The story of the Los Angeles studio musicians who played on hit records by Sonny & Cher, The Ronettes, Nancy Sinatra, the Mamas And The Papas, Elvis Presley and Sam Cooke. It is a more uplifting story than the usual fucked over, cash strapped musician story. These players worked with contracts and got credits on albums. They are people whose day job is music. The release date of this documentary had been delayed due to music rights issues. At the screening I attended, director Denny Tedesco mentioned that he finally raised all the money he needed for music in this documentary, so hopefully it will be available for more widespread viewing soon. (wreckingcrewfilm.com)

Calvary
I am still amused that I saw this film at a matinee with a theater full of senior citizens. They were not as amused. This is the story of Father James, a priest in a small Irish coastal town filled with the worst group of people ever gathered. Everyone has their vices and likes to discuss them with Father James. He good-humoredly puts up with most of it. However during this particular week, one of the town's people has threatened to kill him. The priest knows who it is, but the viewer does not. We go through what may be the last week of Father James's life trying to figure out which one it will be. It is a very morbid thought process, yet utterly engrossing. (calvary-movie.com)

Battered Bastards of Baseball
This is the story of the Portland Mavericks, a baseball team founded by actor Bing Russell with his retirement money. It is an entertaining story even for non-baseball fans. Major League Baseball has given up on Portland as a baseball town and Russell does with his team everything the major teams do not. He allows anyone to try out and hires players who would be unappealing to a regular team. He hires baseball's first female general manager. He makes the game fun for the people and the people start showing up to the games. It also helps that the team ends up being good. This pisses off Major League Baseball who then seeks to get rid of the team. It is an inspiring underdog story. Russell is not afraid to stick it to the man. (netflix.com)

Tino - Frozen Angel
Tino is Martin Schippert, a biker from Zurich, Switzerland who achieves infamy by forming the first European Hell's Angels motorcycle club. Tino was an intelligent, charismatic leader who apparently still had a bit of trouble obeying the law. He is jailed, but escapes to remain constantly on the run from the law for the rest of his life. (voodoorhythm.com)

Jingle Bell Rocks!
Although this documentary starts off as being about people who collect Christmas records, it thankfully quickly gets away from that and into the story behind some of the more interesting Christmas songs. Director Mitchell Kazin starts his journey with his favorite Christmas song of all-time "The Little Boy That Christmas Forgot". It leads him to Bob Dorough and "Blue Xmas (To Whom It May Concern)", Clarence Carter's "Back Door Santa," The Free Design's "Close Your Mouth (It's Christmas)," Run DMC's "Christmas In Hollis" and more. Karin's childlike enthusiasm for the songs and the artists makes the film transcend the usual mundane nature of a film about record collecting. (jinglebellrocks.vhx.tv)

Sacrificial Youth
The idea is so absurd. This is a hardcore punk musical about selling out. It is a musical in every sense. All the major action is sung. It is sometimes not great, but it is always amusing. The film pokes fun at everything in the scene, the things I believe in, as well as the things I don't. (regressivefilms.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, c/o Maximum Rocknroll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. www.carolynkeddy.com

RECORDS

Send **two** copies of vinyl or CD-only releases (if on both formats, please send the vinyl) to **MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, USA**
We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore, etc.—no major labels or labels distributed by major-affiliated distros. Releases without vocals or drums will not be considered. Please include postpaid price and contact information. Let us know where your band is from! *No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork.*

Reviewers A-Z by initial:
(AM) Allan McNaughton
(AP) Ari Perezdiez
(AU) Andrew Underwood
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(CK) Carolyn Keddy
(CR) Camylle Reynolds
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DV) Diana Vashti
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(FS) Fred Schrunk
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(GB) Graham Booth
(GH) Greg Harvester
(JD) Justin Davisson
(JM) Jeff Mason
(JR) Jason Ryan
(JU) Justin Briggs
(KC) Kyle Canyon
(KK) Kenny Kaos
(KS) Ken Sanderson
(LA) Lydia Athanasopoulou
(LG) Layla Gibbon
(LP) Langford Poh
(LT) Lena Tahmassian
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MC) Mitch Cardwell
(MH) Mike Howes
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MS) Martin Sorrondeguy
(PA) Pete Avery
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RM) Ryan Murphy
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(SZ) Shit Zoo
(WB) Will Blomquist
(WN) Robert Collins

ALPHABET CULT / ELEPHANT RIFLE – split EP

Heavy '90s guitar alt rock from ELEPHANT RIFLE which would not be at all out of place on a modern day equivalent of Trance or AmRep. ALPHABET CULT, on the other hand, is like a drunken, drugged out version of the same genre, but with endearing (if amateur) male/female vocals. It's heavy, but it just kinda lumbers. After I finished, I jammed the ELEPHANT RIFLE side again. (WN)
(no info)

THE ANTI-PSYCHOTICS – "302'D" CD

Probably the most sub-par, run of the mill, punk by numbers dreck that I have heard in a very, very long time. One of the singers sounds like a troll or maybe a weasel, though, and I really liked that, but this is super generic. Oh, and do I need to mention that their cover artwork depicts them killing their stocking-clad nurse? This is generic and incredibly boring. I'm embarrassed for punk at the moment. That one weasel singer is awesome, though, I'm actually serious about that. (DZ)
(self-released)

APPLESEEDS / STRANGE MATTER – split EP

APPLESEEDS play three up-tempo pop punk songs. The first one is pretty peppy, pretty poppy and pretty catchy but still fast and punky. The second is more aggressive, a little heavier and all, but maintaining the sung vocals. Its major downfall is the massive amount of cheesy guitar shredding. The third song sounds more like a pop punk band trying to play a hardcore song. Still more aggressive, heavier and with even more guitar shredding. On the other side, STRANGE MATTER sounds like some sort of Mystic Records reject. Three skate punk/hardcore songs in that early '80s LA sort of way. It's kind of goofy, sloppy, and poorly recorded. (PA)
(Dirty Hippy Barn, no info)

APURTU – "Katwen Hirian" LP

Although not very dudely, snarly, or stupid, I guess you could get away with calling APURTU streetpunk. It would definitely drive the leather jacket/charged hairdo crowd super apeshit. Plenty of chunky chugga chugga verses, and chanty, anthemic choruses, but this is lyrically so much smarter than the typical offerings of the genre. While sung in Basque, lyrics are printed in Spanish, Basque, French, and English—which I really appreciated—and read like short poems, or even shorter, hopeful stories. This is good, simple, catchy three-chord punk. If the lyrics weren't this great, I might have accidentally disregarded this, but I'd really like to hear more. A fucking treat. (DZ)
(Campary / H'art Scum / Hohnie / Kartier Libre Association / Mal-Mai / Skizo Diskak)

ARNDALES – "Padded Posts/Regional Treasure"

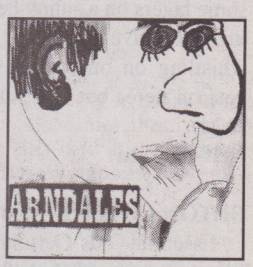
Two songs of churlish, noisy pop music with bleakly intoned vocals over a grinding, jangling soundtrack. Wiry and WIRE-y, FALL-ing and laughing, it's post-punk but current. The group comprises veterans of various British bands: their "ex-members of" list reads like a John Peel playlist from 1991, or the contents page of MEMBRANE John Robb's book *Death to Trad Rock*. If you get that reference at all, then you should probably also get this record. In the Red also released a six-song EP in the US last year, I must seek it out now. (AM)
(In the Red)

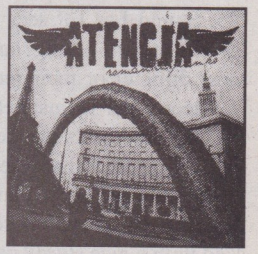
ATENCJA – "Romantic Punko" CD

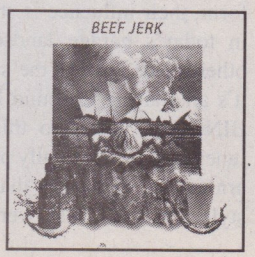
Full disclosure: I don't know anything about this band and I don't know Polish, so my information is a little spotty. I believe this is a compilation of the last few years of recording efforts by these guys, including some EPs and unreleased songs. ATENCJA plays polished, tight punk / streetpunk with gruff vocals and melodic guitars. It seems like there's a different guy singing on the later songs of the CD with a higher voice. Oddly, the latter's voice reminds me of Robert Smith's (of the CURE) early days when he was still kind of bratty and whiny (I mean this in a good way). Overall, this is decent Polish punk, but lacks some hooks to make the songs memorable. I forget each song when it's over. There are some stabs at ska and reggae, which I can only describe as "ill-advised", but different strokes for different folks. Musically, the band is tight and energetic, but the hooks just aren't there for me. (GH)
(No Pasaran)

BAD DADDIES / HARD LEFT – split EP

Bay Area punx BAD DADDIES throw down three good raw numbers. Lotsa fuzzed out guitar and rumbly







bass. Camylle's voice comes across real well with a lot of attitude. They can go from a full-on hardcore sound to a straight up punk vibe in just two songs. Love the wailing weird guitar sound on "Festering Brine". The vocals on their last tune fits between the singer from ICON A.D. (who apparently was just called "Caroline's sister") and Alicja Trout—which is always a good thing. HARD LEFT's side is really great and catchy street punk with tight playing all around. "It's Not You" is rough but easy-to-follow Oi! and soon to-be-going hoarse vocals along with a cool backing chorus. I would've never guessed this band had members of BOYRACER and BLACK TAMBOURINE who were fine bands in their time but this is such an interesting surprise. (JD)
(Emotional Response)

BEEF JERK – "Schooners" EP

Endearing Sydney indie-poppers with a beach burnout PAVEMENT or even DINOSAUR JR. vibe. Echoes of other current Aussie faves of mine like UV RACE (but less weird), EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING (but less everything). Guitars chime and meander and it's hard not to picture the band enjoying some lagers on a sunny beach. The slacker feeling does give me slight hippie chills (there's whistling on one song, which is actually the best on here) but I'm sure they're nice dudes. (AM)
(self-released)

BETON COMBO – "Sound Ltd" EP

Essential '80s German punk EP released in between a great LP in '81 and a decent 12" in '85. Sound Ltd EP sees BETON COMBO at their most hard-hitting, and has always been the most difficult of their records to find. It's not "hardcore" per se, just heavy on the crash cymbal and the vocals are delivered more aggressively than the other releases. "High On War" is instantly the most memorable track, and is basically a perfect punk song. It's lovingly reissued with a nice sturdy card stock cover and an insert with photos and some writing about the EP in Deutsch and English. An absolute must for fans of '80s punk, and highly recommended to everyone else too! (MA)
(Static Age)

THE BINGERS – "Gonna Get You" EP

While bands like BLACK LIPS and THEE OH SEES aren't exactly originators of the form, their influence is still factor numero uno in today's garage landscape. With so many other bands waving the same fuzzy flag today, it's all starting to sound like the same ol' shit. BINGERS falls into this category. The four tunes here are all totally passable takes on modern garage, but other than the underlying surf styles (which I wish were more up front, surprisingly), they don't offer much in the way of transcendence. The template used here totally works as a jump-off point, but it would've been nice to see them stretch it into something their own. (MC)
(Tall Pat)

BLEST MESS – "The Album" CD

Sounds like they could be going for that '77 in '82 SPECIAL DUTIES thing with some elements of the CRAMPS and SEX PISTOLS thrown in the mix. Following logically from this, they remind me a bit of Punkcore bands of yore such as DEVOTCHKAS, particularly in terms of the vocals, choppy structure and lyrics, that are excessively disgruntled in the second person. They are from New Jersey and look tough as fuck. (LT)
(Street Urchin)

BOYS ORDER – "Tomorrow Dancing/Danger! Danger!"

Very poppy power pop from Japan. Picture, if you will, a very clean, adult power pop sound, most appropriate for a bar, with a female singer who is the lost Chipmunk sister. For those of you who follow Japanese bands that sound like a sugar high, BOYS ORDER reminds me of WHO THE BITCH and KETCHUP MANIA. This record is very slick in both production and playing, including a hilarious metal guitar solo. I found the music to be rather lacking in verve and couldn't remember any hooks, so it's a total air ball on that end. The vocals are incredibly annoying and I honestly wouldn't be able to recommend this record based on them alone, even if the music wasn't entirely forgettable. Perhaps if you are a rocker who also enjoys J-pop, then you would like this. (LP)
(Secret Mission)

THE BROKEDOWNS – "Life Is A Breeze" CD

Actually, with sixteen tracks in just over half an hour, life is more of a whirlwind with these chaps. A cross between the emo heavy mastery of early HOT WATER MUSIC, and the short, sharp melodic shock of WIRE's debut *Pink Flag*, this is actually even better than the above makes it sound. Smart, catchy, heavy, and tuneful as all hell. No surprise that it's on Red Scare. The imprint of pure excellence. (RK)
(Red Scare)

THE BRUISERS – "The Gates of Hell" EP

A reissue of one of Al Barr's pre-DROPKICK MURPHYS band's 7"s. The title track listens like something you'd hear at a rockabilly Halloween party, and the other side treats us to an Americana-fied cover of JOHNNY THUNDERS "You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory," along with the song "Tear It Up" (not a JERRY'S KIDS cover), which is a halfway-decent "streetpunk" (hate the term) number with some simple, angry hooks and lyrics that call out fakes. I'm sure some people will be excited that this is back in print. (DG)
(Chapter 11)

BUCK GOOTER – "The Spider's Eyes" LP

This is really painful to get through. Industrial late '90s style metal blues. I say industrial only because there are mechanical drumbeats and annoying clingy metal sounds throughout. They're trying to be over-the-top dramatic, maybe like later NICK CAVE or some other bullshit like that. HENRY ROLLINS writes their press sheet. Oh the pain. (RO)
(Feeding Tube)

BURST OF RAGE – "Mad Guillotines" – CD

Not the D.C. skate rock band of the same name, but some serious hardcore punk from Japan! I'm a weird fan of hardcore punk, to be quite honest. I have about three percent of the knowledge almost any of my other punk friends have on the subject, and you could generalize me as a hater. I do, however, really enjoy going apeshit over the good insane stuff. This is one of those bands that I could totally see me going apeshit over. These dudes are killing it, and I'm gonna listen to the shit out of this again and again. Fast, intense, brutal, and pretty infectious. I'm the last person your hardcore punk band wants to review your record at the compound. It's usually all bullshit to me, but this is a pretty fucking fantastic rager. (DZ)
(MCR)

BUTCHER ABC – "Road to Hell Live" EP

A rather crisp-sounding live document of these o.g. Tokyo goregrinders, there's enough slugging death metal slime here to satisfy the discerning hordes. I technically made it to the end of the record, but this was over for me as soon as the opening track "Dismembered Mama" started sampling the sounds of a woman being murdered over its chugs. So profoundly gross and shitty, ugh. (WB)
(Power It Up)

CANCERS – "Fatten the Leeches" 12"

Here're some catchy pop songs for you. Sure there are rock drums and fuzzed-out guitars but these are pop songs. It sounds like the RENTALS minus the Moog and the almost sickening cuteness. Really, the guitar melodies and the vocal delivery totally sound like the RENTALS. It's a little heavier, maybe a bit more aggressive, more punkish (like that one that sounds like the BREEDERS) but they obviously figured out how to write a catchy tune and how can you complain about that? (PA)
(Dead Broke)

CARNE – LP

Hailing from Granada, Spain, CARNE ("meat" or "flesh") offers up a refreshing take on '80s-style Iberian punk. You will definitely hear echoes of the signature bass and guitar styling of LA URSS, which shares two members with this band, though they add a post-punk twist here. I sense equal parts PARÁLISIS PERMANENTE and LA BROMA DE SSATAN but with the vocal style oscillating between the defiant roar of VULPESS and ÚLTIMO RESORTE and captivating melodies of SIOUXSIE. The record artwork is super well orchestrated and this thing just looks and sounds great all around. CARNE forms part of the vibrant and under-represented Andalusian punk scene and if you're in Europe it may be well worth a trip down to Granada just to catch these folks live, drink beers while loitering in a plaza, and imagine the era of the al-Andalus caliphate. Rumor has it they even do a DÉCIMA VÍCTIMA cover. (LT)
(Subterranea)

CATHOLIC GUILT – LP

So fucking good! CATHOLIC GUILT surfs that shaky line between hardcore and straightforward punk with some Eastern European influences in the guitar…but that could be the chorus pedal that they use. The lyrics are smart and caustic, angry and defiant, but maintain a melody, avoiding that feeling of a pissed off dude yelling at you. Total downer punk. I'm hearing some distant influences of SICKOIDS, later-period RUDIMENTARY PENI, and maybe even NEGATIVE APPROACH, but no carbon copies. This LP is so great! (GH)
(Dirt Cult)

CAUSTIC DEFIANCE – "Controlled Aggression" EP

Fast, raw, snotty hardcore from Peoria, IL circa 1983. that brings to mind small-town teenage rebellion, fueled by boredom and a mishmash of short, fast, and loud sounds—some double speed, some melodic, but all desperate. Mostly 1-2-1-2 drumming, very adolescent-sounding vocals that are sometimes sung, and sloppy, melodic riffing, with a great, rough, lo-fi recording. I'd possibly make hindsight comparisons to early CAPITALIST CASUALTIES, ASPIRIN FEAST at half speed but just as good, and Frontier Records bands minus the recording budgets, but is ultimately excellent anyplace USA hardcore. (DG)
(Kangaroo / Way Back When)

CELA NR 3 – "Stilonka" LP

Here are eighteen tracks of melodic and bouncy punk recorded in communist Poland in 1987 that are just now seeing their very first vinyl release. Their survival up until now has depended on the conservation of some old tapes—impressive considering how tough it was just to record any non state-sanctioned music in Poland at the time. This is proof that there is a seemingly inexhaustible repository of punk yet to be dusted off and this all gets me very excited thinking about it. Their sound is located somewhere between the RAMONES and the first QUEERS album, with the added bonus of a keyboard doing an occasional melodic lead. Frankly, I had no idea Poland had anything this pogo friendly in the late '80s and I liken it more to the melodic punk coming out of Finland in the late '70s and early '80s such as RATSIA or NAUTA. Don't be fooled by the cartoony cover, painted recently for this release, which makes this thing look like a contemporary pop punk record. It is in fact an old treat, maintained so that it could one day be enjoyed beyond Poland's borders. Insert included with the Polish lyrics. Keep it coming! (LT)
(Pasażer)

CHAR-MAN – "Burning The West" LP

It took me a good while to get into this. Not because I was on the fence about it—it just literally took a few moments to get to the meat of the record. Ignoring the number one rule ("Start off strong"), these guys opted to begin with a forty-second, near unbearable, nonsensical, jumbling of words, before diving into a four-minute long, run of the mill song entitled "Surf Jam"! Two strikes so far, guys. Luckily, I passed the test and persevered. I was glad I did when I finally started hearing some really great rock, RAMONES, surf, and maybe even doo-wop worship, not unlike NOBUNNY at times. Named after a local, legendary, motorist attacking, hideous ghost, and sharing the same vocalist as LECHEROUS GAZE (which is blowing my mind that this is the same guy), this would go well on a mixtape between HARLEM and NIGHTMARE BOYZZZ. This rules pretty hard. (DZ)
(Mr. Squeegee's)

CHEM-TRAILS – "First World Problem, Third World Solution" 12"

This sounded so familiar when I put it on the turntable. Ripping Connecticut crust from members of OILTANKER, MAN THE CONVEYORS and BROKEN, all bands I have enjoyed in the past. Crust always has the tendency to sound pretty formulaic, however this is pretty engaging, if you can ignore the lyrics, which can get to be corny at times. (AP)
(Vex)

CITY SAINTS – "Go And Die" CD

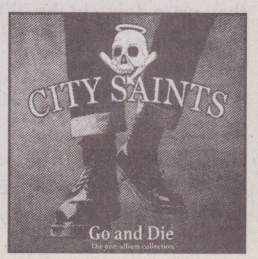
Street punk from Sweden. These guys are big on COCK SPARRER. Throw in SWINGIN' UTTERS and a little SMALLTOWN too. This is a collection of non-album tracks. Quality stuff for the genre. These guys are obviously passionate about the sound and it shows with their spirit. I liked this comp a lot. (RL)
(Spirit of the Street)

CLASSHOLE – LP

Heavy, somewhat metallic gnarly NOLA-based hardcore. The vocals are somewhere around Jerry A., COSMIC PSYCHOS and a non-stinky GG. All the songs rip through nice and fast. Even their mid-paced numbers don't let up the spite. "Whole Lot of Nothing" even reminds me of recent DARKTHRONE only more punkified and noise-rawked out. The speed and intensity of "Burning Pain" is rather good, too. I bet they put on a real kick arse live show as well. (JD)
(Terror Cult)

CLUSTER BOMB UNIT – "Heute Wie Morgen Wie Gestern" EP

Nineties German band that played fast D-beat tinged hardcore. This EP had female vocals that bring HEALTH HAZARD to mind although not as powerful musically. Would have never thought a reissue was due of this record. (MS)
(Power It Up)



THE CRAMPS – "Big Beat From Badsville" CD

The godmonster from the end of the world… The switchblade sound of Lux and Ivy glamorizing death and destruction. Sleazy and swinging monster movie soundtracks for sleazy swinging monsters… What can you say about the CRAMPS at this point in time? Even in the '90s they still were able to put forth the vile juice for their maniac fans, stylish and sick in equal proportions. You probably already know if you need this or not… (LG)
(Vengeance)

THE CRAMPS – "A Date With Elvis" CD

When I was sixteen I inherited a bunch of mixtapes from my older sister (who's kind of square) and "What's Inside A Girl" was on one of them. I mean, when I was a teen I was definitely into it and other things like GROOVIE GHOULIES and maybe even STRAY CATS. I still dig some of the CRAMPS but this one is just teetering a little too much on the edge of rockabilly for me. This CD is just a reissue of a reissue. It has the bonus tracks that were on the first reissue, but otherwise it's nothing new really. If you are a punk you probably already know of this band and if you like this band and like this era of them you probably already have this. R.I.P. Lux Interior. (MM)
(Vengeance)

THE CRAMPS – "Fiends of Dope Island" CD

What the bloody hell? A new CRAMPS record? I was secretly hoping for some embarrassing, posthumous, TUPAC-like record, but no, this is simply their last record that I have never heard of, originally released in 2003, and reissued in 2014. You know the deal, right? Reverb drenched, simple psychobilly songs about a lot of drugs and a lot of sex, played by a loving couple in their sixties. I'm usually pretty leery of listening to bands in their super late, lamer years. Although this is lacking just a bit of the insanity, a pinch of the fear inducing vocals, and a dash of their earlier, simple brilliance, it's still *really* good CRAMPS. Most likely the reason that I've never heard of this record is that they've never really done it for me after the *Bad Music*… album, with a few records being downright unlistenable. This isn't an instant classic, won't scare the shit out of thirteen-year-old kids like they did to me way back when, but it's surprisingly pretty fucking good, so much better than a lot of things they were doing in the '90s. (DZ)
(Vengeance)

THE CRAMPS – "Look Mom No Head!" CD

Reissue of the fifth studio album from the CRAMPS. The album was originally released in 1991 and this is the second reissue go-around, now on the band's own label. I have seen the CRAMPS live a bunch of times. They were one of the most fun live bands ever. Why they couldn't seem to capture that in the studio is just a shame, and this album is a good example. The songs are funny, weird and kitschy. The playing and singing is great. Yet the whole thing sounds tame and underwhelming. Alas. If I didn't know anything about the CRAMPS I would just think this is an OK rockabilly album. That's wrong. Though not listed on the back cover, the CD includes two bonus tracks, "Wilder Wilder Faster Faster" and "Jelly Roll Rock," that were also included on the previous CD versions of this album. For added fun, IGGY POP does some vocals on one song "Miniskirt Blues". (CK)
(Vengeance)

THE CRAMPS – "Rockin n Reelin in Auckland New Zealand XXX" CD

Not sure I can add anything that hasn't already been rhapsodized about *Rockin n Reelin in Auckland New Zealand XXX*. This album is a true classic. Recorded live in 1986 at the Galaxy in Auckland, New Zealand, it's a killer live set by these garage punk legions. With most of the songs drawing off their album *Date with Elvis*, it's recorded with the perfect amount of fuzz, burn, and echo. Bonus tracks added in this reissues are "Blue Moon Baby," "Georgia Lee Brown," and "Lonesome Town." CRAMPS fan? It's a must-have. If it isn't already on your record shelves or stored somewhere in your music collection, you can be assured that this will not disappoint. (CR)
(Vengeance)

THE CRAMPS – "Stay Sick!" CD

I have to confess I never quite "got" the CRAMPS. Never been a fan of that cranked up rockabilly / pyschobilly / surfy reverb-on-overdrive sound. I've never shared their fascination with leopard skin. But maybe it's just because I never saw 'em live. Lux vomiting onstage back in the day apparently had a profound effect on the young Ian MacKaye. Can't really argue with that. This album originally came out in 1989, has been remastered and rereleased half a dozen times since then, and on this iteration includes half a dozen "bonus" tracks. Regardless of my thoughts on the quartet, I suspect you'll already know if you need to get this or not. (RK)
(Vengeance)

CRIME DESIRE – "Your Power" LP

Over the past ten years or so, these San Diego punks have built up quite a solid discography but I can't think of another recording of theirs that has had such an immediate and visceral impact on me. From the timeless opening mosh riff/"Yeeeaaaaaah" to the subtly tweaked recording to the raging solos and rock-solid rhythm section this is the work of a band that's firing on all fucking cylinders. The snarled vocals and metallic touches betray quite a bit of SEPTIC DEATH influence (a comparison I don't make lightly) but the backbone is rooted in the straightforward drive of '80s East Coast hardcore à la SSD or ANTIDOTE. The churning title track starts out with a gloomy almost SAMHAIN vibe that stands out from the rest of the record while still fitting in beautifully, building into a chaotic wail that ends the album with a rush of energy. If CRIME DESIRE weren't on your radar before then they damn sure should be now. Great stuff! (AU)
(Standards)

THE DAHMERS – "Demons" CD

Rabid rock'n'roll horror nerds from Sweden! Oh boy. Fucking horrible pop punk with Italian horror movie themes that's comparable to the DICKIES and NEW FOUND GLORY. Like a thousand tiny shards of glass thrust in my eyes. They compare themselves to THIN LIZZY. How dare they? (RO)
(Farsot)

DEAD GHOSTS / SKEPTICS – split EP

There are two covers on this 7": DEAD GHOSTS play the KEGGS' "Girl" and SKEPTICS do GROEP 1850's "Misty Night." Both songs have a gritty, dark '60s feel. The songs are fuzzy and melancholic with a bit of an edge. It sounds really nice. (CK)
(Frantic City)

DE-CULTURES – "Nightingale" LP

The cover depicts skeletons in hoodies and boots crowding the pit, so you know what you're getting. This four-piece from Yokosuka City, Japan, deals out tight, energetic hardcore. The driving songs with sick, savage riffing make this a good listen. They have a strong sound, full production, even some variety to the songs, by the standards of the genre. It's pretty hard to make a hardcore LP that rules all the way through, a problem that surfaces here. These guys have all the pieces in place, but like so many LPs, by the time we get to the second side, I'm ready to move on. Otherwise, it's a strong release. (JM)
(Too Circle)

DEMOLITION – "Bombenhagel" CD

Holy shit!!! This is the very definition of a juggernaut! Based on their legacy, the fact that DEMOLITION delivers an incredibly powerful record comes as no surprise...but from the mostly instrumental intro track they drop severe tonnage on *Bombenhagel*, and the intensity skyrockets from there. The base here is fist-in-the-air anthemic Japanese hardcore but there are overt NYHC elements that fall just short of beatdown breakdowns, and their integration of '80s heavy fucking metal into the

mix is both shameless and brilliant. Even on mid-tempo plodders like "Hail Satan" (which is really little more than a Sunset Strip banger with VENOM vocals) the foot never leaves your throat. A seriously incredible release, taking punks' flirtations with metal and launching them beyond simple MOTÖRHEAD worship (which is easy), injecting the hooks into jaw dropping Japanese hardcore. The bar just got a little higher, metalpunks—now you've got something else to strive for. And again: *Holy shit!!* (WN)
(MCR Company)

DIALS – "School Girl / Nervous"

DIALS return with their third single, not to mention their first available for consumption outside of Japan. "School Girl" boasts an itchy, clean guitar chop that will have fans of pre-"16 Wires" REGISTRATORS convulsing around their turntables. "Nervous" lightens the vibe a bit with a danceable bop, complete with handclaps and a quality spastic, garage riff. DIALS have come across both darker and punker before, but I suspect this EP will be the one that gets the most folks stirred up. Great stuff! (MC)
(Mangrove / Secret Mission)

DIE LAST – "Ostatni" LP

A new album from this Polish emo band. I don't know what bands to compare them to, but it sounds pretty by the numbers to me. Every song does the "quiet-loud-quiet-loud" pattern that I expect from the style. One vocalist handles high-range melodic vocals, and another guy handles the screams. It's really just the same thing over and over to me, and not a style that I really like, but at least it's well produced and the layout looks nice. It also comes with a bonus DVD with a high-quality full DIE LAST set from 2014. (MA)
(Kaifasz / No Pasaran / Last)

LOS DISCKOLOS / DIE SCHWARZEN SCHAFE – split LP

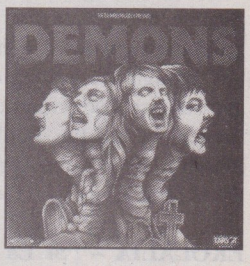
LOS DISCKOLOS from Buenos Aires' seven songs have really inspiring lyrics. It's a matter of total frustration in doing reviews that largely, in the West, the lyrics often seem afterthoughts at this point, something that cheapens the whole experience regardless of how good the music is. I think there's sometimes the impression that everything has been said, but bands like this, and Spain's ACCIDENTE, are really inspiring to me, how they can take the simple formula of punk, and still artistically and poetically spin powerful statements that address living now, not pressing out cookie cutter patterns and ideas of the past. Their music is somewhat basic, no fault '77-influenced guitar-driven punk that serves as a framework for those lyrics. There're weak points and CLASH via RANCID-ish moments I could steer clear of, but as an experience of listening and reading the translation and meaning, it's a pretty pure and the best kind of punk experience because the lyrics seem at the same grandly defiant and intensely personal. Shouted choruses, whoa whoa's and some rock'n'roll guitar sheen in plain but solid production. On the flip, Germany's long standing DIE SCHWARZEN SCHAFE (the BLACK SHEEP), whose origins date back to the mid 1980s, offer up a seven swan-song of their thirty-year career proudly in DIY punk, that's as diverse as their vast catalog. There're moments of pure Deutsche Punk melodic greatness, CITIZEN FISH style flirtation with the edges of ska, swaggering vocal-driven '77-isms (that maybe struggle a little on their balance without the listener being fluent in German) and an absolutely stunning moment when they sink their teeth into a cover of a LOS DISCKOLOS hardcore song, and completely and totally draw blood with the delivery and the biting harshness of translating the lyrics into searing German. It's a fitting and fine bow (though "Upperclass Girl" has a few sour doo-wop-ish notes) with the scalding expressive vocals tying the various styles together. Great split! (KS)
(Black Wednesday / Camary / Hart Scum / Matus / Rusty Knife / Your Poison)

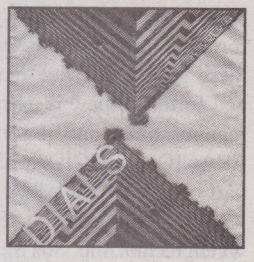
THE DOGSHIT BOYS – "Puke" 10"

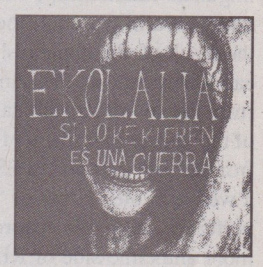
Live shots of the band suggest they are going for the TURBONEGRO thing, but they accomplish it more in looks than sound. It's pretty basic snotty Finnish punk with a dose of rock thrown in. "Girl, Eat My Shit" gives away the obvious GG ALLIN influence, and "Cougar Woman" further suggests their emphasis on subjects of sexual deviation, but most of the songs are in Finnish. The record looks so unappealing to me that it's hard to resist tossing this into the shit-pile of sleaze-punk garbage, which it pretty much is, but it's got some undeniably catchy choruses, good riffs, and a direct approach that manages to hold my attention. (MA)
(self-released)

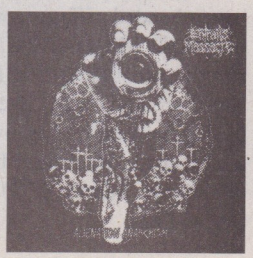
DRIBBLE – "Lovers" 7"

The first pleasant surprise of 2015 came to me all the way from Melbourne Australia, thanks to this 7" EP from DRIBBLE. Everything from this band's name to their art direction—not to mention its provenance via Cool Death and Distort Records—would indicate whiplash-inducing, noisy hardcore slime along the lines of that last VELVET WHIP tape. I'd already cleared all my things off of my desk at my old apartment to avoid knocking anything over due to involuntary thrashing when I dropped the needle onto a riff that sounds like it could have come out of the LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH songbook. A different sort of greasy vibe than the one I was expecting, but a nonetheless appropriate soundtrack to some post/romantic lyrical meditations on obsession, masochism, and wandering through the city streets. Over the course of my own daily meandering online I turned up a flyer for a bill the group shared with LOW LIFE, which sounds like a well-matched line-up of down under down-and-outers exploring the dark depths of performing urban masculinity through fuzz and chorus effects. The B-side takes a slightly slower VOIDOIDS-esque trudge into the same streets as they empty out, save for the obsessive wanderers and nihilist observers. We also have one last drugstore cowboy song on this one, riding the same chord progression and arrangement as the last two tunes all the way into the sunset of this short but sweet record. These are streets we've walked before, but a lot like a close friend of yours who tells you the same two or three jokes over and over again, it might just grow on you. The labels responsible have assembled a handsome and elegant package here with a six-panel 14" x 21" poster insert and lyric sheet. Naturally, looks like this one is already sold out. If I were to win a wager on the 50-50 chance between some new recordings









getting dribbled out and the band going out in a blaze of ignoble glory, I'd put my winnings towards that next 7". (EW)
(Cool Death / Distort)

DRY HEAVES – "Monotony" EP

This record is so good, I can't handle it. If CAREER SUICIDE upped the garage punk and stripped down their songs to one-chord riffing alternating with jaw-dropping hooks, they might sound something like this. Two relentless, mid-paced bangers with snotty, pissed vocals and a goddamn breakdown at the end of "Monotony," but through the lashing out at daily drudgery and state-sponsored murder, there's a sense of irreverence and fun. Looks like I'll be injuring myself to them come April. (DG)
(Neat Neat Neat)

EKOLALIA – "Si Lo Ke Kieren Es Una Guerra" EP

These tracks were recorded in 2013 and can finally be taken in through the tangible vinyl format. I have been fortunate to be able to catch these guys live twice recently in Los Angeles and so this review is extra timely. EKOLALIA features three out of four members of GENERACION SUICIDA who have also formed part of other notable LA punk projects such as LA VOZ and RAYOS X. I really dig this stuff, which recalls mid '80s Spanish and Latin American (including Brazilian) punk. Aside from the linguistic relationship, these historic punk currents have in common the fact that they were the result of simultaneously digesting punk and early hardcore at the same time and straight from the source. Specifically, I hear the rumble of the junkie godfathers of Basque punk—aside from the obvious nod to ESKORBUTO through a well-executed cover of "Abajo la ley" fitting perfectly onto this record—there is also the more anthemic side of RIP and CICATRIZ, as well as FOGO CRUZADO weighing in from the other side of the Atlantic. Great stuff and crucial listening for fans of PURA MANÍA and LOS MONJO and I'm super stoked to hear what's next. (LT)
(Verdugo)

ENDLESS BUMMER – "Vol. !" LP

Am I the only one that sees TY SEGALL's name on something and immediately wants to yack? Putting my uneasy stomach aside, this is some damn good stoner rock mixed with dreamy '60s pop. It's got MOUNTAIN size heavy-handed riffage combined with the JESUS AND MARY CHAIN and a huge dripping mouth load of RADIO BIRDMAN. Surf drums, handclaps and reverb-filled guitar gives you the nice feeling of surfing over Palm Desert sand dunes, meth filled light bulb in hand, soaking up the rays. Serene. (RO)
(In the Red)

ENTRAILS MASSACRE – "Alienation Anarchism" EP

This is a nice little 6-inch slab of deathly fast grind out of Germany. Apparently these guys have been a band since 1990. I wish I knew about them before now 'cause they are sick! Think ASSUCK and CARCASS, evil screeching vocals and quick jarring riffage. A few songs feature a vocal effect that sounds like a fetus screaming from the bottom of a drain. Love it! (BA)
(Power It Up)

EXACERBACION – "Desastre Humano" EP

A South American/Malaysian grind experience beginning with a romantic acoustic guitar intro—things quickly get ugly, however. This is true splatter thrash in its most repugnant form, mid-tempo vapid death just the way I like it. Loose and droning for fans of EXCRUCIATING TERROR and SCROTUM GRINDER—you know who you are. EXACERBACION gets the job done, if the job is backing up the toilet and sledgehammering the pipes off. Repetitive, nasty, and sincere gore-grind, you freaks of nature. (JR)
(Pan Del Muerte)

EX-CULT – "Cigarette Machine" LP

A six-song 12" from the Memphis rockers EX-CULT, continuing in their path toward more atmospheric and experimental sounds, although the singer still sounds like he's trying to get into your face to really make his point. He's not that aggressive, just really intense and close. (CK)
(Castle Face)

FANG – "Landshark" EP

Wow. This is a blast from a dark and shady past. This record was the soundtrack for bad decision making in my youth. I'm not going to drag out the infamous history of this band. They make computers for that sort of thing now. Fucking Tom Flynn's guitar screams and lurches down the street like a nodding prostitute in the TL. This band along with FLIPPER and TALES OF TERROR inspired folk in the northwest to start the whole grunge thing for better or worse. Some songs like "Skinheads Smoke Dope" don't quite hold up to the 40 oz. smashing cheers of days gone by but, yes, I would call this record essential. I hear Mr. Town is doing good these days. God bless him (RO)
(Boner)

FERAL TRASH – "Trashfiction" LP

So imagine you were trapped on a desert island with nothing other than the first three WIPERS records and your own feeling of inescapable depression. You spend everyday of your life breaking open coconuts, hating life, and listening to *Youth of America* for the 10,000th time. Then one faithful day, a MASSHYSTERI record washes up ashore and changes your life. Their jangly pop songs cut through the sorrows of your dark anguish. Never curing you but giving some genuine relief. Once the rescue ship comes, and you returned home, this might be the kind of music you'd create. Although these guys are from Canada, so maybe I should have used some kind of snow related metaphor. Never the less, FERAL TRASH play dark and catchy punk that is unapologetically rooted in the WIPERS sound, yet has a modern feel to it. Theire 7"was awesome, and this LP is even better. Totally worth tracking down. (FS)
(Dirt Cult / Mammoth Cave)

FREYA POLICE – "Skate Gang" LP

This is my kind of thing. It's mid- to up-tempo. It's catchy. It's got energy. In the promo sheet that accompanied the record, they like to draw comparisons to the BUZZCOCKS, 999, and the VIBRATORS. Okay, maybe. I think the references to BAD SPORTS, FM KNIVES and the CUTE LEPERS are more on the mark. I'm not suggesting that's a bad thing. They certainly draw influences from the first wave of power pop, but the sound is definitely more contemporary. (KK)
(Gone with the Weed / Requiem Pour Un Twisteur)

GARYU – "From Reality..." CD

From what I can gather, this is the debut release from this Yokohama, Japan-based quartet. What a release it is! I'm generally agitating that bands should pare things back; just a few of your best songs, and what do you have to say you can't say in two minutes? GARYU is living my dream. They play a fast, heavy, dark, metallic hardcore, which doesn't wait for anything. There's not a wasted half-second on this five-song disc. The band is tight as hell and they rage to devastating effect. The songs are crammed with ferociously growled lyrics, mostly in Japanese. These are older guys who, from the sound, have been around and refined what they're doing. I love this thing—very highly recommended. (JM)
(MCR)

GAS CHAMBER – "Hemorrhaging Light" LP

I remember several years ago when my friend from Buffalo gave me a GAS CHAMBER demo and said that it was the best current band from his town. A few years after that, he moved back to Buffalo to play guitar in that band and then they released what is arguably the best hardcore record of 2014, and definitely the most unique. From a foundation of powerviolence that on its own is more than enough to warrant endless accolades, *Hemmoraghing Light* digs so deep into the visceral; emotional

power of sound and goes so far beyond making just another hardcore record—even a really good hardcore record rarely has the ability to totally control like this one. And I say all of this without even delving into how screaming this is from a purely technical view: riffs that make your jaw drop blending seamlessly into PENI-esque discordance, jazz, throat shredding vocals of the highest order, and sounds that are simply unclassifiable in the context of what you think this record should be (and "My Warsaw" somehow encapsulates all of that in less than 90 seconds). I suppose GAS CHAMBER have made the quintessential progressive PV record? That demo my friend gave me was, in fact, insanely good, and the vinyl releases that followed have all been excellent...but few times have in my life have I heard a record that I would put in the same class as this one. Making sound is one thing, making the listener *feel* the sound? That's next level. (WN)
(Iron Lung)

GG King – "Unending Darkness" LP

Esoteric Lore was one of my favorite records and it came out seemingly so long ago I sorta lost hope for a new volume of GG outpourings, but 2014 came to end and here it is! The malicious kicks / vicious elation of the first LP have been replaced with a end of the world resignation feel, there's almost a *Youth of America* epic feel, long drawn out, driving songs with layers of otherwordly sounds and whispered endtimes invocations / yowled declarations of disaster... Song titles like "Squandered Magic" and "Picnic Destinations for Unimaginative People" give you a sense of what you're in for. Manic frenzied sections give way to weird "Gangster Funk" interludes, borrowed black metal riffs and snippets of stolen lyrics all give this a surreal collaged feel. The more you listen the cooler it sounds, controlled wilderness, a nihilistic concept record for those who seek nihilistic concepts! (LG)
(Scavenger of Death)

GHOST TOWN – "Harsh Light" EP

Undepraved nu-goth version of early HOLE with almost, *almost* a touch of WIPERS. This is like "Good Vibrations" by THE BEACH BOYS, not in sound at all but just as the verse is real good and weird and the chorus is just kind of awful and predictable. This is also one of those instances where I'm general fan of the work of James Fella and most of what Gilgongo shits out so I give this more of a look and then wonder if I would give a shit if it didn't already have that going for it. According to the notes this was a one-off, one day to write and record a song, and in light of that this is pretty good. Not amazing but not bad. (MM)
(Gilgongo)

GIGLINGER – "Epic" EP

The A-side is, like the name implies, a hard rock epic with hints of metal, punk, rock'n'roll. Pair with light headbanging. While calling a mere five-minute song epic may be considered dangerous, these two minutes of soaring rock intro beg to differ. The deep, monotone vocals come in with a plodding guitar part that moves slowly along until the song gets bigger and bigger at the end. On the B-side, you get two songs that are more up-tempo punk numbers. It's a little like the DEAD KENNEDYS with a post-hardcore lean. Anti-Nazi songs just never get old and this record really does get better with every listen. (PA)
(self-released)

THE GOOCHI BOYS – "Oops!/Fast Food for the Teenage Soul" LP

I wouldn't understand putting out a compilation of a band's first two records only a couple years after the originals were released, except that these both were released as tape-only releases (by Burger Records). *Oops!* was released in 2011, *Fast Food for the Teenage Soul* in 2012. And while I may still struggle, if only just a little bit, with this plan, I have to say that I am super glad they decided to do it this way. I'm not hip enough to still own a tape player, but this music is absolutely phenomenal. If you're fan of slightly goofy, super lo-fi punk/pop music, as I am, you'll love this. Think O-LEVEL and early TELEVISION PERSONALITIES. Then fast forward that to 2011/2012, add a ton of fuzz, make it a little more up-tempo and just slightly more polished. Just slightly. This is awesome. (KK)
(Windian)

THE GOODBYE PARTY / SPOONBOY – split EP

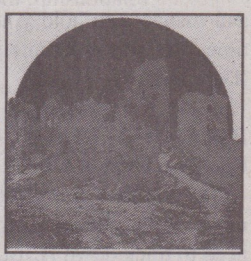
There is almost magic in the way SPOONBOY can play emotional pop punk, and create a song that's *not* annoying. And at his best, he can create insanely good songs. It's pretty much musical fact that it's impossible to write a good pop punk song about your ex-girlfriend (or boyfriend). But somehow SPOONBOY has repeatedly defied the punk laws and given us countless good songs about love and the loss of it. Don't take my word for it, listen to his stuff, it's generally really good! This split EP may not be him at his best, but it's pretty good. The first song is kind of on the Saddle Creek Records side of things, but the second number is a super catchy track. It's almost like he tried to recreate SPRINGSTEEN's "Spirit in the Night". On the flip-side, the GOODBYE PARTY give us two tracks of bedroom indie pop. No one will confuse these songs with punk. What if EVERCLEAR made songs you actually wanted to listen to? It might sound something like this. It's soft and sweet. Not bad, unless you're itching to get into a pit. (FS)
(Silver Sprocket)

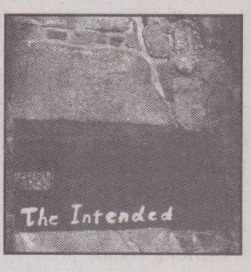
GRIN AND BEAR IT / RABID PIGS – split EP

Both sides of the blistering hardcore split start out with dramatic, extended spoken-word samples. Both sides take me back to the confusion and isolation of the world in my late teens and early 20s. This is dark hardcore to unlock your mental stability and the mysteries of the world after home. GRIN AND BEAR IT play trampling fast and blasting powerviolence. RABID PIGS punctuate as the fastcore thrash attack. This is a great split, which is cold, furious and poignant in lyrical content. (JR)
(Rotten to the Core)

THE GRABOWSKIS – "1977" LP

So I just learned that current punk bands from Germany don't have much internet coverage in English. I guess that's why we're here. The GRABOWSKIS are pretty fuckin' punk, punk being a wide ranging gamut of historical styles including OC style hardcore punk, street punk,





anthemic Deutschepunk, POGUES-style drinking anthems, TOY DOLLS-ish ska-punk, mix-it-up mix-it-up. My favorite thing is prolly the first song 'cause it starts out like BAD RELIGION or some shit but then the singer comes in ablazing sounding like Bon Scott / AC/DC. This would be perfect for a walkman because they keep changing it up, but all the songs have a common thread running through it. Limited #'d to 500 and about 1000 times punker than me. (GB)
(self-released)

HASSLER – "Fed Worked and Watered" LP

Raging D-beat influenced hardcore out of Toronto. And when I say "raging" I mean every song is a fucking shake-your-fist-in-the-air rager. Apparently members of HASSLER have been in almost every good band you can remember, like: TOXIC HOLOCAUST, BRUTAL KNIGHTS, CARREAR SUICIDE and even fucking CHOKEHOLD. But even without that all-star cast these recordings would hold up. Super full, awesome sounding guitars with shredding solos sprinkled throughout the record, perfectly distorted bass and some of the cleanest and fastest drumming around. The vocals are super throaty and sound like it took years of hard alcohol and cigarette consumption to get that way. This is also a full sixteen-song LP, which is impressive seeing as how most bands can hardly pump out enough material for one side of a LP these days. HASSLER does it and manages to hold your attention the entire time. This shit is definitely worth a listen. (KC)
(Deranged)

HELL CITY KINGS – "One Night Stand Ego/Two Grams All For Me"

Do you like drugs, motorcycles, denim demons, thick guitars, and bar punk? Yes? You need to track down HELL CITY KINGS, drink nine pints with them, shoot up some speed, get in a fight over a girlfriend and get the fuck away from me. It sounds like these dudes listen to a lot of old SUPERSUCKERS, ZEKE, and TURBONEGRO. The lyrics are literally *"She was shooting up some speed. She asked if I wanted to share some. I said 'Fuck yeah!!'"* I can't figure out if it's so dumb that it's endearing, or embarrassing. Take your pick. The insert art is amazing. (GH)
(Artificial Head)

HOBO BASTARD – "Strange Wang" LP

I was going to start by badmouthing the aesthetics of this release, but what do you have if you're a band of pop punk loving nerds from fucking Tempe, AZ with probably not much more culture wise than each other and your internet connections? The stuff here is pretty jokey, and pretty inside jokey at that, but the music is what I'm here to talk about. This is some pretty straightforward pop punk with a bit of more punky chug and some emo touches, especially in the over the top octave backing vocals that pop up from time to time. I feel like at one time this band could have walked the line with, say, being on a certain shoe company's traveling music tour, but now this stuff is purely for dorks. There're hints of JAWBREAKER and perhaps some other Bay Area pop punk/emo bands, and mixed in is a tinge of something a bit more forgotten, perhaps a bit of MALIGNUS YOUTH pop heaviness. That said, I don't think these guys are writing songs about being Christian, and there are no blastbeats on this record. I guess if I had to recommend this record it would be to fans of earnest-ness and pop punk anachronism. (LP)
(Boomchock!)

HOLLOW MOUNTAIN – "Maiden" EP

Fuzzed-out grunge guitar tone driving SABBATH-like riffs and bellowed lyrics of wizards and Satan with simple mid-tempo punk drums and thumping proto-metal bass riffs. With so many influences you might think the sound may be redundant and forgettable but HOLLOW MOUNTAIN actually have something pretty unique going on. I can't decide between calling it garage metal or wizard punk but either way, I'm enchanted and ready for more. (DV)
(Tall Pat)

ICKY BOYFRIENDS – "Live In San Francisco" LP

Beginning with their 1990s recordings, the biting criticism and uncomfortably potent noise made by ICKY BOYFRIENDS placed them in a class inhabited by legends that forged their own path via damaged, borderline-inept punk racket. Flash-forward 20 years or so and it's clear that the band's viciousness hasn't dulled in the slightest. I attended the show captured on this album (one of a handful the band has done in recent years) and I'm so very thankful to Castle Face for making this document available. In many ways, this is the best recording of the band existent. Jon Icky's verbal vitriol is always fierce and aimed at the right sources, but he's got plenty of sensitivities on display here to charm the new converts, which I presume will be plentiful. Furthermore, the performance in total shows the band that top of their game: powerful, tight and explosive on-demand. The updated "Ecophobia" (for, ya know, fracking) and the anthemic theme song "No Duh" are obvious highlights, but it's the newer material (*yes*, new tunes!) that provides the true revelations. The world is a better place with ICKY BOYFRIENDS actively calling bullshit on it, and this live album does the best job imaginable of capturing the off-the-charts punk magic this band has. Highest possible recommendation! (MC)
(Castle Face)

THE INTENDED – "Huguenot/The Alchemist"

Wild, unfettered, experimental DIY workouts that will make your heart and brains swell and murmur in unison! "Huguenot" is a stomper of a track, total bombastic deconstructed glam meets SWELL MAPS insanity! Then I can't stop playing "The Alchemist" over and over again, total liberation sound, a song for freedom of intent… the guitar lines clash and burn in such a majestic fashion, just perfectly delightful weasel-y solo lines sauntering over the best riff heard in 2015, creatively stealing from the past in order to liberate the future for new realities and so on. This record rules, the songs are catchier than words can convey and will directly transform your life so buy or die. (LG)
(All Gone)

JETTY BOYS – "Singles Collection" LP

Out here in the Bay Area, the majority of punks will look down their nose at you if you even admit to having a soft spot for SCREECHING WEASEL. And they were doing this even before Ben's recent rash of fan-punching and cop-loving turd-ery on social media. But as you start heading inland, toward the mountain and central time zones, you start to see a steady thawing feeling towards this villainous band. By the time you hit Wisconsin, it's almost like everything after *Bark Like A Dog* never happened. It is in this fertile pop punk soil that has spawned some of the most exciting pop bands of the last decade. Why? Because these kids don't keep their love for pop buried under the mattress. They wear it proudly on their t-shirts and their sleeves. They don't disguise it in their bands under several layers of being arty or being weird. They just straight up make some unapologetic pop songs that directly reflect the music they are obsessed with. However this can also be a terrible thing, cause countless boring clone bands have arisen under the same circumstances. But, this is what you get with JETTY BOYS; some pure unadulterated "I love the fuck out of GREEN DAY and SCREECHING WEASEL" pop punk. And if you can honestly say to yourself, "I could listen to GREEN DAY everyday for the rest of my life and not shot myself", clear some time tonight, and blast JETTY BOYS at max volume. (FS)
(Urban Pirate)

KENNY KENNY OH OH / LAMBS – split EP

Split post-punk album from a couple of German noisemakers. KENNY KENNY OH OH have a more aggressive PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES thing going on. Mainly guitar-driven with riffs oscillating between sharply picked single note runs and fast attack chords. LAMBS is closer to the DC post-hardcore side

of things with more emotional vocals and rhythms driven by the bass and accented by more noodly guitar parts. LAMBS has more of an old-school emo thing going on in a good, good way. Both sides are well polished and feature two solid tracks. Definitely worth a listen! (DV)
(Contraszt!)

KHMER – "Nubes Que Anuncian Tormenta" LP

Wow, this is a total late '90s throwback! Heavy metallic hardcore with a mix of distinctly black metal leanings and melody that you could file alongside bands like SUICIDE NATION, DARKEST HOUR and UNDYING. Coincidentally I've been revisiting some of this stuff lately, so I'm quite in the mood for this kind of thing, and KHMER do it pretty damn well. The screeched vocals could use a little variety, but there are a good amount of gang vocal back-ups that add some diversity to the attack, and these guys have totally nailed the epic feel necessary for songwriting like this to stand out. The drumming is admirably restrained, definitely more rooted in hardcore than the typical blast-beat overload, giving the speedier passages extra impact. The A-side and B-side material come from two different sessions, and the 2012-era B-side stuff suffers in comparison to the newer material; still good but a bit more derivative of their influences. Still, if you're looking for a band that can rip this style in 2015, KHMER are your gang. Don't think I've heard a band in this style from Spain either, which is an interesting twist. (AU)
(Halo of Flies / In My Heart Empire / KTC Domestic Productions / Long Legs Long Arms / Nooirax Productions / Tupatutupa)

KNÆGT – "Ingen Rök Utan Eld" LP

The tendencies of KNÆGT from Malmö Sweden's eight-song debut LP lean a bit stronger towards the lineage of Norwegian hardcore, with gruff sung vocals over more than proficiently played melodic hardcore, with a tinge to large swaths of musical complexity threaded throughout. Maybe more consistently speedier, cleaner and with more rock tendencies than something like 2:20 and more pop than SO MUCH HATE, there's still a similar feel of that style which never shaves down the rough edges to fall completely into pop punk, but then spins around melody on a much deeper level than most hardcore. A strong outing with a really full, pro recording and propelled by its musicianship. The lyrics are entirely in Swedish and, except for cultural nods to the US (a song about Adrian from the *Rocky* movies, and the cover features a funny take on the band members as Marvel / DC superheroes) the intent of the band is otherwise mysterious. Good listen. (KS)
(Sista Versen)

KYLE KINANE / THE SLOW DEATH – split EP

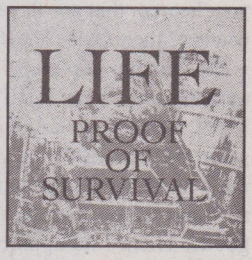
This is a really good, really weird release. I think it's pretty well known that I have a pretty strong dislike for most whiskey soaked, gravelly voiced dude rock. That being said, when bands like the ARRIVALS, SLOW DEATH, or TILTWHEEL show up on the scene (my record player) and do it with gusto (Damn! You bet!) I get pretty stoked. I have to admit that I found it very odd that SLOW DEATH chose to cover not one, but *two* YOUNG PIONEERS songs for this EP. I usually don't appreciate note-for-note cover versions, but these guys somehow managed to pull it off, staying true to the original version, but I can still smell the whiskey breath, and see the spitty vocals from that goddamn giant of a singer. YOUNG PIONEERS is one of my favorite bands, so I was super skeptical, but it's great. Plus, you can finally hear the vocals, unlike in the YOUNG PIONEERS versions where they were usually buried in the mix. On the flipside, comedian KYLE KINANE tells a pretty fucking funny story about a skunk. It seems like he is wasted in this recording, but still in complete control of the crowd, still managing to spin a good yarn. I like this a lot. (DZ)
(Rad Girlfriend / Silver Sprocket)

LEMURIA – "Turnstile Comix #3" EP

LEMURIA and I go way back. The first time I visited DC as an adult my sweetie took me to a hardcore show with them headlining and after several fairly serious injuries to punks during the three opening hardcore and powerviolence bands, LEMURIA took stage and everyone came together to sway and "whoa-oh" together. This is a hella fun record. First of all, it comes with a Mitch Clem comic about the band's nightmare, Nazi-plagued tour of Russia in 2011. The 7" contains a couple of tender-tough pop songs, and both are charming per usual, and a bonus track is included via download code. I tend to like their more distressed songs better so "Foggy Smoke" on Side B is my personal favorite, but they do joy as well as they do angst and who can get too upset with a song with nods to the ladies of FLEETWOOD MAC? (DV)
(Silver Sprocket)

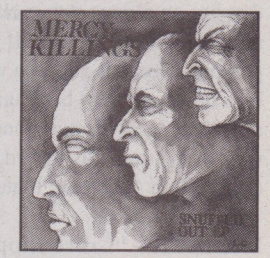
LIFE – "Proof of Survival" EP

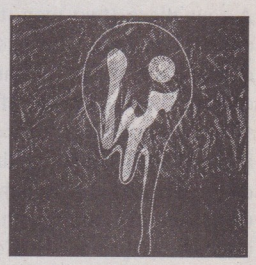
After dropping one of the very best LPs of 2013, LIFE finally returns to the fold with a new recording that proves they're sticking to the path laid out on the *Peace Violence and Peach Research* LP: raw, lo-fi crust with riffs catchy enough to stick in your head for days afterwards. Dead basic single-note leads destroy everything in their path, the bass is pitched so low and dirty that it's more felt than heard and the drumming is nigh-feral in its power. Obviously the template was laid out by bands like CRUDE SS and DOOM, but at this point, Japanese crust is a known commodity unto itself and LIFE are some of the elder statesmen of the style. The big surprise in this recording is the epic title track, which definitely hearkens back to the more metallic style they experimented with on the *Warning* EP, complete with an epic thrash riff and a big breakdown that must inspire crazy dance floor action. For nostalgia's sake I guess I prefer the A-side ("To the Forgotten" is as classic a song as LIFE have ever written, poignant lyrics and all), but goddamn "Proof of Survival" is a badass song. Let's just call it a great EP and leave it at that. (AU)
(Heartfirst)

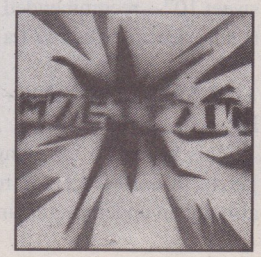


LIPSTICK VIBRATORS – "Low Winter Blues" CD

This is a Japanese release from a French punk rock'n'roll band. A garage feel here with a little STOOGES, MURDER CITY DEVILS, and some JELLO BIAFRA vocal stylings. Eight rockers on this that probably sound pretty good in a bar. This stuff is always better live. By no means classic punk material but a good time for locals for sure. (RL)
(Attitude)







LOW CULTURE / NEEDLES//PINS – split EP

LOW CULTURE plays two jangly rock'n'roll, pop punk songs in that UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO CANDYLAND sort of way. It's sounds much like their LP, except the recording doesn't sound quite as "big," which actually works pretty well for the band. Both songs are short and catchy, the only problem being the jerky bridge on the first song, which is a bit disconcerting (not good for pop songs). NEEDLES//PINS plays simple power popish stuff, not bad but not particularly exciting either. The only thing that really jumps out is that the singer sounds a whole lot like the guy from the VINDICTIVES. (PA)
(Dirtnap)

LOW FORMS – "Cherry Tigers/Pendulum Swing"

Bands like LOW FORMS demand that you either have a space already carved out for them in your heart or that you have no other contact with bands of their style. The style in question today is D4 worship pop punk. If you have all those records, plus some TILTWHEEL, MARKED MEN, SHANG-A-LANG (do I really need to go on with this list?) and you find yourself craving a short, two-song thump of a more orderly and mid-tempo variety, these songs have the goods, There's no apparent whining, no super fast sixteeth notes on the high hat, no sloppy playing, just some melodic vocals over music that has an almost pub rock chug. Familiar, but in a utility kind of way. If you don't have any pop punk records and you want something new by a relatively new band, and you aren't turned off by some rhythmic monotony, you could do way worse than this record. (LP)
(Big Action / Tectonic Plates, no info)

MAKACH – "Crève Hippie Crève" 10"

From the dismal industrial confines of Lille, France comes the debut release of MAKACH. A four piece (two men, two women), they're catchy and fast, with shouted and frequently double-time vocals. What I love is how they capture the excitement of a band starting out, where everything is pushed just beyond the limits and barely holds together. The six songs are distinctive and cool and the sentiments right on (lyrics are in French, with English and Spanish translations provided). Comes with a booklet containing writing (in French) from the labels and reprinted 19th century essays. Overall, it's a sweet 10"—recommended. (JM)
(Lada / Lucane Distro / La Societie Pue)

THE MARVIN GAYS – "Sleepless Nights" LP

This has got a lot going on. It's catchy and jangly in a 1967 garage rock sort of way, but also got an underlying eeriness that acts as a sort of base. At times I'm bouncing my head, other times it's more like swaying. The guitar is also, at times, very reminiscent of the pop that was born of the US punk scene of the early '80s. If you know the band FLYING COLOR, that will mean something to you. I'd mention REM in that same context, but hesitate, because it doesn't sound anything like REM. I like it right off the bat and suspect that I'll like it more and more as I continue to listen to it. If you're a fan of garage-based punk, you'll want to check this out. (KK)
(Alien Snatch)

MASSGRAV – "Extra Nitad" LP

First off. Germany. You are making something to last. Here, you do not need to market an otherwise cool looking record cover with a stupid huge circle on the top of the sleeve that says "Vinyl Collector Series Vol. 1" or like those hideous cursive "Hardcore classics" BLITZ-core used to drop on reissues. In the US this kind of "sales talking points" usually go on a sticker on shrink-wrap, which the owner can choose to throw in the thrash or save it, but without that choice to dispose of it, it breaks like the "third wall" in acting, when you realize what's actually going on with commerce, and sales points muddle the art of the band and jacket itself. The design of this jacket continually draws your eye to the "Vinyl Collector Series Vol. 1"… and it's super annoying. Anyway. *Extra Nitad* ("Extra Riveted") is a vinyl treatment of the two excellent MASSGRAV CDs, *Napalm Over Sturplan* and *This War Will Be Won By Meateaters,* originally released on Sound Pollution Records in 2004 and 2008, omitting the bonus EP tracks. Launching from the MOB 47 school of curt blasts of hardcore, Stockholm's MASSGRAV have an unmistakable, continually in-the-red attack, with off-the-charts energy. Throttling, jackhammering drums are capped with slathering, shouted, harsh dual-vocal trade offs over drilling rivets of hammering guitar. The intensity of the 36 tracks makes them a bit much to take in one sitting, and are entirely in Swedish with a few provocative baits, (What war will be won by meat eaters? The colon cancer one? Agh, I think I may have asked that ten years ago in reviewing the original CD release!!), a LIMP WRIST cover in Swedish, but it's 36 fun jolts: cool to have collected in a nice gatefold sleeve and makes another two CDs I can get rid of, so I guess indeed this vinyl collector wins! (K$)
(Power It Up)

MEATBEATERS – "Tug of Phwoarrr!" LP

This is 100% knuckle-draggin', punch-you-in-the-face, guitar solo-heavy rock n' roll. The singer has a snarl that lies somewhere between Lemmy and Frankie Stubbs on a bad day and a guitar tone that gives COSMIC PSYCHOS a run for their money. It sounds like a bar fight on a Saturday night. My complaint with this band is that many of their songs drag on and on and on while the singer repeats the chorus over and over and the guitar player solos into a maddening oblivion. This shit is way more rock n' roll than punk. There are all kinds of sexual innuendoes that aren't exactly gender specific, so I hope and pray that these dudes are gay, because that would rule. (GH)
(Swashbuckling Hobo)

MIETTIIN – "EP-Äpyhä" EP

Excellent, creative, and off kilter melodic Finnish punk, with four out of four tracks totally killing it. They sound like maybe they grew up on a healthy dose of KOLLAA KESTÄÄ, but built on this foundation in new and innovative ways. I'm at a loss for direct comparison, but they remind me somewhat of Sweden's defunct TRISTESS, if they had been more in touch with the melancholy, as well as Finland's MAAKUNTARADIO, but less pop. It's hard to pick but I think my favorite track at the moment is "Alkuvoimia." There is a lot going on including a key change and some keyboard apparatus but it all fits together into a chaotic catchy gem. Housed inside the record, along with an insert including all the Finnish lyrics, is a postcard-sized glamor shot of what appears to be one of the band members, autographed by hand with a heart around his name. If this was destined for me, I accept. Sense of humor seems fitting of the Finnish punk tradition and it manages to permeate the language barrier. Damn! I'll definitely be keeping an eye out for the next release. (LT)
(Ratbite)

MERCY KILLINGS – "Snuffed Out" EP

Second EP from this ex-WASTED TIME band, which is a direct frame of reference for what MERCY KILLINGS sounds like. The POISON IDEA influence that spans *Pick Your King* all the way through *War All The Time* is very much on display, particularly in the drumming, along with a couple of slower Motörpunk numbers that kinda fall flat compared to their straight-ahead hardcore. They have upped the riff-writing ante considerably from the first record, which was good but sounded like a blur; the songs are more defined here. And they certainly saved the best for last: "Fate" is a doozy that is distinguishes itself from everything else even *before* the monstrous breakdown hits at the end. I'm a fan, but this record is worth picking up for the final song alone. (DG)
(Beach Impediment)

MESSRS – EP

Gut rumbling noise rock. The guitars spit out savage, all over the place sounds, while the bass vibrates low, holding down the beat with the drums. The vocals go back and fourth between an almost '90s screamo shriek and a low drunken mumble. MESSERS almost sound like

a sloppier BORN AGAINST. The B-side has a really melodic, bass-driven, catchy guitar hook song, that kind of seems out of place, but actually breaks up the rest of the wall of noise MESSRS puts out quite well. Really simple photocopied sleeve with cool looking trash bag scanned art. Maybe it's not the best thing you've heard in your life, but you'll still have a good time. (KC)
(Savage Quality)

MORAL DILEMMA – "Is Anyone Alive Out There?" LP

Good effort here from this London (UK) trio. This is their third full-length, but the first in five years. It shows in their mature but still tight songs. While their material is mostly in the same vein—catchy, rough-edged and rough-voiced, up-tempo—there's enough difference between the tracks to keep the thirteen songs from all blurring together. They step outside their standard sound at times, with organ and harmonica on "Building Gallows," the bluesy swing on "Too Little Too Late," and the bleak, crushing, closing number. Dual vocals on the choruses carry some urgency, though overall the sound is a little compressed. The angry, despairing, political lyrics go well with the music and vocals. Definitely a strong LP, and I liked it more every time I played it, though the band says it's sold out. (JM)
(FDH / Volar)

MORAL VOID – EP

This is harsh crust punk metal with an echoic and haunting delivery. Abrasive and brief, it seriously seems to hit every bone in just the right spot, leaving you beat up and wanting more. "Flood," the side B track, heavily integrates discordant blast offs with paralyzing breakdowns and deep infectious bass lines. "Hollowed," on side A, was significantly faster and driven. I find this to be the opposite of how most bands show up with two songs. Regardless, for a two-song EP, MORAL VOID covers all ground better than many LPs. Recycle 'til death. Recommended for fans of ACURSED, proto-hardcore and dare I say HIS HERO IS GONE. (JR)
(Berzerker)

M.O.T.O. – "Chinese Rocks (Or a Fistful of Mao Backs) LP

MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS are pretty much a one-man band for guitar player PAUL CAPORINO with a revolving door of players these days. My friend BETH LOUDMOUTH once played with him and he made her cry so you can see what a tool he can be. M.O.T.O has put out some bonafide classics in the distant past. Unfortunately this ain't one of them. Mr. Caporino just follows the same formula of poppy punk with deadpan vocals. It's a nice formula and can be quite uplifting, like in songs like "Get the Message," but they go from RAMONES or HEARTBREAKERS punk into almost "R.O.C.K."-era JOHN COUGAR territory. There're some nice live songs on it but I'm over it. (RO)
(Secret Mission)

MURMURS – "Bound" LP

Visually, this is a beautiful release. The cover artwork is stunning, and inside is an awesome poster and lyric sheet. The music itself didn't really do it for me, though. Although it is apparent that this music is played by punks, it just seemed like it was pretty basic rock. At times, I hear elements of LEATHERFACE, late era JAWBREAKER, and even DAG NASTY, but unfortunately, without that kick. There are a few sparkly moments sprinkled in here, but not enough to hold my attention. (DZ)
(Dead Broke)

NARCOLEPTICS – "Victims" EP

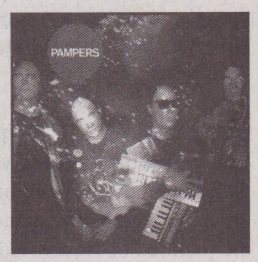
The hard part isn't making blown-out distorted noisy crash punk—that mystery was solved about five punk generations back and the cat is out of the bag. The hard part is making your own blown-out distorted crash punk band stand out in the glut of nonsense that has flooded pressing plants ever since the mystery was solved, especially when the very subgenre in question is known for being chaotic and unintelligible. So you have to sound fukkd and echo everything to oblivion…but you still gotta have a fukkn hook. Listen to "Trench Knife" on the first side of this slab. That's what you gotta do, punk. It ain't science, you just gotta do it right. Tempo is insistent, riffs are face-melting (especially "Cop Sympathizer"), and the whole record is hopelessly on point. Yeah, punk, you might want to move on to the next mystery, because NARCOLEPTICS got this one handled. (WN)
(Warthog Speak)

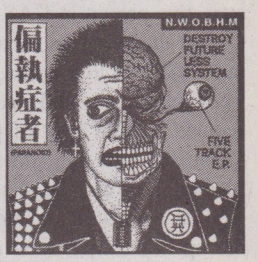
NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS – "Recovery" LP

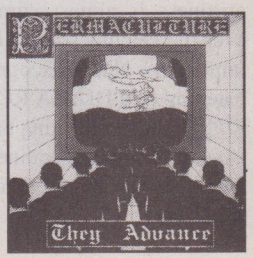
I've been lucky enough to see the NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS a handful of times as well as play a show with them, which is fortunate because as of this writing they announced that they are no longer. R.I.P. NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS. *Recovery* is a great album to close on—solid fucking punk. The first three tracks "Year of the Brat," "Boys for 20 Years" and "Complete Mess" are by far the stand-outs, and those songs alone are worth buying this LP for. Other highlights include "Painted and Gutted," which has a catchy as fuck retro '80s punk brainworm melody, and the closer, "The Pharmacy is Closer Than the Liquor Store," a definite ripper. "Escape the City" is a menacing surf instrumental that serves as almost an intermission, a deep breath before getting back to business. Jenny Angelillo's vocals are controlled throughout—she only really screams it out in "50 Shades of Fuck You." The grip of her voice around each melody shows she's in control. The engine which propels each song is George Rager's guitar work, an incredibly catchy, fast and furious surf guitar with riff after sweet riff, never out of step, completely calculated, but never obvious in the least. Shit. Is. Tight. Their sound can be best summed up as a mix of NIGHT BIRDS, ADOLESCENTS, and WIPERS, with a cleaner and more modern take on '80s punk. Damn shame it's their last release. Highly recommended. (CR)
(Deranged)

NEKRO DRUNKZ – "Tyrants of Toilet Music" CD

This has to be one of my favorite things I've shown Ari and said, "Look what I'm reviewing this month". Priceless. Crystal Seth and Destructor666 (real names) love the MENTORS and ANAL CUNT. It's the long-standing tradition of good old all-American sleazy grindcore. You get songs like "Cottage Cheese Cunt," "AIDS," "Cunt Metal," and the epic "Boobs." I have to admit I get a little giddy







getting to use the dreaded C-word in these pages. Like a twelve-year-old schoolboy. There's lots of wrestling, horror, and porn samples in between way, way too many songs to listen to. It's pretty decent grind, so to quote the DRUNKZ, "Get in the Pit and Take a Shit". (RO)
(Headsplit)

THE NEW FLESH – "The Absurd" LP

Oakland's contribution to the dark punk landscape takes the form of the NEW FLESH. I've seen these punks around the scene in various different bands for years, but who knew they had secret gothic tendencies? The songwriting, guitar playing, and overall sound here is totally on point: Chiming tendrils of melody evoke everything from early CULT to CHRISTIAN DEATH to RIKK AGNEW. The songs themselves are claustrophobic and dare I say bleak. My one criticism is that the atonal vocals were off-putting at first, but as the record progressed I got used to how they worked within the songs. (AM)
(Deranged)

NOFX – "Backstage Passport" CD

So apparently there was a show on FUSE back in 2008 that starred NOFX. There is also a second season in the works. This CD is a sort of soundtrack for that show and includes some (but not all) unreleased songs. The songs on this are ok but by no means NOFX classics. Maybe that's why some didn't appear on more current LPs. If you love everything by this band: get this. If you aren't a completest: make sure you have their regular LPs first. (RL)
(Fat Wreck Chords)

NO MORE ART – "Sorrows of Youth" 12"

It's now been several years since MASSHYSTERI was the #1 heartthrob amongst the punk mass populace. Since then we've torn down the pictures of Robert Hurula from our school locker and replaced them with heart-shaped pictures of LUMPY (or possibly whoever the attractive person in GAS RAG happens to be). One of the better bands to arise in the wake of our VICIOUS love affair, was NO MORE ART. They put out one hell of a 7" back in 2010, and seemed to hold a lot of promise. Their subsequent EPs were fun and exciting, but they also seemed to be inching to a cleaner/poppy sound. And at long last we are now graced with a 45rmp full length; their debut full length. It's great and, perhaps predictably, follows their evolution towards a cleaner/poppy band. The grittiness is almost completely absent, however the catchiness may be at an all-time high (among the NMA discography, that is). It's like listening to a DIANA ROSS album, if DIANA ROSS (and her backing band) discovered punk. I mean that as a genuine complement, by the way. This is a great record. (FS)
(Rockstar)

OI POLLOI – "Multiple Oi-g@sm" EP

OI POLLOI does in fact say "Oi!" on each of these three songs. "Drabastair" is the closest to my taste, mid-tempo and rough, with the chorus serving as an easy intro to Scottish Gaelic, which the band's been using to promote language and cultural diversity. The A-side, "Skinheads Of Tomorrow," captures the worst parts of Oi!—trudging metal riffs with a hint of melody, the chorus three (four?) times—though by such standards this is far from the worst offender. OI POLLOI has refined this style through decades of work, and for those who enjoy this type of lager, you won't have to push by me to get a space at the bar. (JM)
(Rotten to the Core)

PAMPERS – "Right Tonight" EP

Experimentation be damned, this is straightforward big-guitar punk, executed with the economy of a band like HEX DISPENSERS, but with a drive and immediacy that rubs shoulders with hardcore. Four tunes in all, no duds. Unsure if I can peg this EP as an abrupt switch in gears for PAMPERS, but I will say it's my favorite effort outta them to date. (MC)
(In The Red)

PARADOX – "The Constant Grip" EP

This here is a fun one. Nothing too crazy, just six slices of straight-ahead menacing hardcore, but Atlanta's PARADOX wave the mid-tempo D-beat flag with enough style to keep things interesting. The guitars are actually surprisingly un-raw, but the vocals manage keep things feeling filthy, and when they do pick up some speed on tracks like "Cursed" listeners will struggle not to raise a leather-gloved fist in the air. I could definitely see some folks comparing this to HOAX, but they'd only be half-right. (WB)
(Imminent Destruction / Shithammer)

PARANOID – "Destroy Future Less System" EP

Five tracks of powerful KREIGSHOG / MORPHEME style noise drench from Sweden, with squealing guitars over a thumping rumble of hardcore charge with howling vocals. Burning on the edge of fast, the band repeatedly drops off and into powerful breaks and fulfills the style well, with dark mood and inventively squealing soloing guitar overtop. The Japanese fetish extends beyond music styling with a nice packaging of lyrics, band name and entirely in Japanese…which is kind of corny (There's almost nothing in Swedish on the entire release) but it looks good and pairs well with Alexander Heir cover art. Lyrics are curt, with English translation about the hell of life, nuclear holocaust, corruption and the life of hell. Includes a sticker and nice two-color cover. (KS)
(Konton Crasher)

PERMACULTURE – "They Advance" EP

Peace punk in the modern day brought to you by the people from NERVOUS TREND and SOCIAL CIRKLE. Clean singsong vocals with riffs that sound like CONFLICT and a hint of CRASS tempo. This is not reinventing the wheel but it has a refreshing newness to it for fans of modern day peace punks like VIVID SEKT. This is this band's second release, which is still not enough for me, please give me more! (AP)
(Inflammable Material)

PIGEON RELIGION – "Warm Insides/No Boundaries" EP

PIGEON RELIGION is the soundtrack to some deep dark shit. This is a reissue of a cassette that Drone Errant put out (I think that dude also did DRUNKDRIVER and DELICACIES OF CONSUMING HUMAN FLESH) and, let me tell you, it drones hard. Or better yet, I should say, vibes hard. It's like Masonic meditation. Maybe on the level of what Anton LaVey was into as a kid before he started getting in to Satan. It reminds me of some of the more understated, noise acts on Subterranean Records (FACTRIX, NERVOUS GENDER, etc.) from back in the day. The best example here would be a mix of FLIPPER (without all the heroin/death) and KILSLUG. I got to see these guys live a lot when they were still around. They were unbelievably loud and would often belt sand pieces of sheet metal during gigs. I was always amazed at how the records translated so well over to their live sets. Perfect example, I think they looped crowd sounds and audience clapping at the end of each side of this record, which totally gave this a live feel (also, each song is exactly 5:44. Did you guys know what you were doing?). Anyway, if ya don't got the cassette, you should get this record. For fans of: vacationing in the tropics, touring Israel, and the picture of D. Boon eating a sandwich on the back of the DESCENDENTS' *Fat* EP. (MW)
(Gilgongo)

PISS ON AUTHORITY / SLUG – "Echoes Of The Past…Reverberate Into Our Future" CD

PISS ON AUTHORITY plays Euro epic crust. Every song builds up with melodic guitar hooks and eventually leads to a crescendo-ing chaotic circle pit riff. The vocals are the best part of this band, but unfortunately the drums sound like they're struggling pretty hard to keep time and pump out good fills, which kind of kills the sound. There's a part on the last song "Choking" where it sounds like a seriously fucked up high school drum line is practicing. SLUG are more straightforward British street punk. The opener for their side of the record kind of sounds like DISCHARGE(?) but maybe that's being to generous. The rest of it sounds

like late '90s streetpunk with a British accent. This wasn't *that* bad, but still, the best part was when the CD was finished. (KC)
(AWOL / Freedom Punker / Global Resistance / Pumpkin / Riot Ska / Suburban White Trash / Unleashed Noise / A World We Never Made)

PLASTIC CAVES – "Dispossessed/Cold Remains"

This band wrote one of the missing singles in between KILLING JOKE's *Fire Dances* and *Night Time*. I feel like I haven't heard a band go for that style in a while. Sure, there're a lot of "death rock" bands that take their influence from British New Wave bands, but not a lot that try and copy it so well. To be clear, this isn't punk mixed with goth, this is straight New Wave. The vocals sound like they're coming from the snobbiest kid too, kinda like that self-assured, mid period NEW ORDER vibe. There's also a whole lot of flowery guitar noodling that reminds me of TECHNIQUE. I feel like the A-side, "Dispossessed," is a stronger offering because, where the B-side is far more darker/brooding, Side A completely gives in to needless melody. For fans of: Poetry, clove cigarettes, government gridlock. (MW)
(Carbonated Sounds)

PLEASURE CROSS – "Wait for the End" 12"

Massively filthy grinding hardcore with retching vocals to match, these are the simple sounds of perversion made flesh. PLEASURE CROSS apparently spun off from WALLS, but crusty death metal vibes coupled with nausea-inducing tremelo riffing mark this as an entirely different beast. Sometime it goes into pure shredder territory, while other parts sound like they were written strictly for pit-kills. Truly putrid. We have seen the light. (WB)
(Iron Lung)

PRINCE – "In the Living Room" EP

A pleasant mix of San Diego dude stylings and a strong love of SUPERCHUNK and MARKED MEN. Not much information is given, and with such an intentionally misleading moniker, it's not incredibly easy to find online, either. Kudos for that. This Austin four piece is kinda rockin', and I think I'd cancel one of my six jobs for the night if they came to town. Oddly, the first side didn't really do it for me on the first couple of spins. Side two totally kills it though and is super catchy and rowdy. The more I listen to this, the more I think these guys must have the *hugest* SUPERCHUNK altar at their practice space. Fuck it, it's still good. (DZ)
(A.D.D. / Dead Broke / Drunken Sailor / No Breaks)

PURE DISGUST – "Denied" EP

These DC kids picked up right where 86 MENTALITY left off. This record is the best mix of modern skinhead hardcore I've heard in a while (alongside the VANITY LP that was just released on Katorga Works). The production on this record is perfect. Thin, jangly guitars, much like the TEMPLARS, with gravelly vocals delivered by what sounds like a very angry troll. This record is mostly mid tempo, which totally adds to the overall groove, without sacrificing the anger created by the faster parts of the songs. It's melodic, without being cheesy, and the guitar solos mesh with the songs without being overbearing. The lyrics are real as fuck too: *"You have no clue what it's like to be of color / So just go, and pretend you're like no other… You say you speak for all injustice / But you only seem to care when the injustice is against people like you."* Most of this record seems to tackle what it means to be a person of color in the USA, all while tucked in the angriest delivery possible. I love this EP. Get your hands on it. For fans of: house shows, cheese pizza, and hoodies. (MW)
(Flophouse)

RADIOACTIVITY – "Danger/Why"

Once again, RADIOACTIVITY is half of the MARKED MEN and primarily the vehicle for Jeff Burke's songwriting, so you probably already have an idea if you're gonna track this one down or not. "Danger" is perfect, straightahead power pop / punk that flows so smoothly that you'll wonder if these guys even sweat in the studio. The guitar outro is one of those Burke specialties where he only plays six or seven single notes but somehow makes it memorable. "Why" is a little more off-kilter and has vaguely more complicated drumming, but is still firmly in the camp of the unfuckwithable Burke style. They play deceptively simple-sounding songs that are really so difficult to write. You can't go wrong with this band. (GH)
(Secret Mission)

RADIO HATE – "Main Nerve" CD

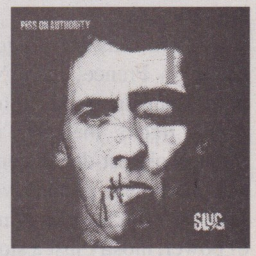
Out in the heartland, Sheboygan, WI to be specific, there's one guy who wrote, recorded, produced and put out this entire CD. This record is impressive, even if it's totally not my thing. MAIN NERVE tows the line between Duane Peters' project DIE HUNNS and FEEL THE DARKNESS light. At moments, the tracks remind me of MÖTLEY CRÜE, without any of the danger. The redeeming qualities of this record are not the songs but the DIY attitude, mainly the fact that this dude spent the time writing songs, as well as figuring out the production aspect of putting out a record. Good Job. For fans of: White Castle, Diablo II, and Mountain Dew. (MW)
(Urban Pirate)

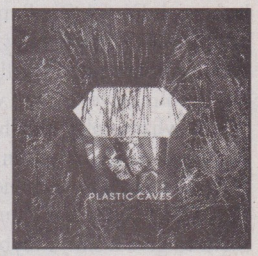
CJ RAMONE – "Last Chance to Dance" LP

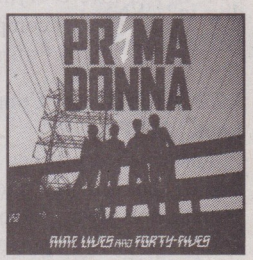
This is my payback for making fun of GB when he had to review the 7" a few months back. Touché, coords. But doesn't everyone know Richie is my favorite Ramone? I don't begrudge CJ using the Ramone moniker. He was one, he gets to. That's the rule and, really, who cares? However he does have a lot of audacity starting this album off with the riff from "Beat on the Brat" and then turning it into a generic, slick tune. Of course, this doesn't sound like the RAMONES. I wouldn't want it to. CJ is backed by two ADOLESCENTS and one SOCIAL DISTORTION, but the music is still lame and over produced. Some lyrics attempt being political, even singing about Mr. Kalashnikov. CJ may have invigorated the RAMONES when Dee Dee left, but that was 25 years ago. I guess invigorating isn't CJ's thing anymore. (CK)
(Fat Wreck Chords)

RATS AS BIG AS DOGS – "Attract" CD EP

Hailing from the UK, RATS AS BIG AS DOGS play urgent, energetic, catchy, post-punk and post-hardcore. I would go as far as saying that there are elements of grunge







thrown in here too…just a little though. Female and male (but mostly male) vocals harmonize and yell through five short songs with subjects ranging from materialism and self-worth to the personal-as-political. Even though the songs blazed right by, they made an impact and provided some good hooks that were spinning in my brain afterwards. I'm gonna spin 'em a few more times. (GH)
(self-released)

RAVIN – LP

Bizarro outsider art/goth punk from somewhere in France, RAVIN emphasize the odd more than the good, unfortunately. The interesting tracks meander aimlessly, lumbering through almost-dance beats with erratic synths and mumbled, garbled vocals. The fast tunes (most of which are instrumental) lack any kind of power, mostly just a sloppy, erratic expulsion of sound closer to some psych freakout punks than to anything dark or mysterious…"La Collezione di Franck Zito" might be the exception all the way around though; plodding non-riffs with a garbage pile of brilliantly fuzzed-out guitars drooling over the top while keyboards try to decide what to play and the vocalist blurts gruff nonsense. Seven songs in, and this bullshit has actually started to suck me in. I still don't think that RAVIN are good—but I like that they don't seem to give a shit. Maybe this is art/punk, but if so then I'm certain that the result is by accident, not design. If you like your shit weird… dive in? (WN)
(self-released)

RED AUNTS – "Come Up for A Closer Look" 2xLP

I have a theory. When girls in a band employ singing that is a high-pitched, screaming, aural assault, guys always have to say that the women don't know how to play their instruments. It is a defense mechanism. The guys just can't handle the noise they are hearing. In their case the RED AUNTS had the right attitude. They didn't really care what the guys said. They did what they wanted. For this I thought they were cool and fun and wild and exciting. This attitude is emphasized on the back cover of this album. In the liner notes the band taunts men with a "how much do you really need to tune?" attitude. I am sure it infuriates musos. It cracks me up. The RED AUNTS were around from 1991-1998 and this album is sort of a greatest hits collection. It does include my all-time favorite RED AUNTS song "Krush." However it doesn't include my second, third and fourth favorite songs: "Teach Me to Kill," "Built for A Bar Stool" and "Lethal Lolita." It is only a double album after all. However, lots of classics are included which immediately bring me back to those crazy days. They do the angry, screeching, bad girl '90s thing so much better than COURTNEY LOVE—if only one of them had married Kurt. (CK)
(In the Red)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS – "Dead Roach/ Sound on Sound"

I always feel really uncomfortable when I hear this band. I don't get it. Is this even punk? After several Warped Tours, and being on the soundtrack to at least seven major video games, I think it is at least debatable, but I'm a judgmental asshole. Let's pretend, for a moment, that you haven't heard these guys yet. Radio friendly, energetic, slightly aggressive pop that almost always gives me the feeling that every song was crafted in a lab, with the intention of being added to a movie soundtrack. Beautiful artwork by the amazing Tim Kerr and side two is a BIG BOYS cover, "Sound On Sound." I love Tim Kerr, but I think this band is absurd. Limited to 500 copies, and if you want it in "bitcoin blue" you have to go online and buy it with a bitcoin, or whatever hilarious bullshit normal people do that I just don't understand. (DZ)
(End Sounds)

ROADSIDE BOMBS – "My Side of Town" LP

My Side of Town is the anthem for folks who grew up seeing the FORGOTTEN and listening to the BRUISERS. Remember back in the '90s when all the rock'n'roll parts of all your favorite skinhead bands were sandwiched in between the more straightforward RANCID riffs? This is the furthest logical conclusion of that. This is US ROUGHNECKS light. If this had been released in '97, you bet it'd be on GMM or maybe even Hellcat. The common lyrical thread on this record is "living in the back streets," being abused by the system and fighting your way out. Not the heaviest topics but shit all punks can relate too. All of this is tucked in a very modern, punk, interpretation of JOHNNY THUNDERS. I saw these guys once at a benefit for the saintly Bruce Roehrs and I kinda wish he was here to help me out with this review. This is definitely on the level of Skinhead rock'n'roll à la the '90s ANTI-HEROES records. For fans of: dark'n'stormies, playing catch, watching *Daredevil* in theaters when you were thirteen. (MW)
(Chapter 11 / Contra / Longshot Music / Pirates Press)

ROTTEN – "Bat Shit Crazy" EP

A.K.A. ROTTEN UK. I am not sure what is going on here. Cover art looks just like DISORDER EP art. "City Witches Attacked by Bats" is scrawled on the back. Band member names are Joel Division, Anarchy Jake, Sinn Vicious, Matt Sexx, I don't want to think this is a joke but it really comes off as one. Musically, the opener is a pretty good song, heavy on the bass delivering a spooky, atmospheric experience I am assuming the band intended. The rest is fair but aside from the sound this is seriously hard to digest. Would have been more impactful if this band worked on developing a unique identity and stayed away from falling into the caricature punk realm. Wait! Is this a joke? Cuz I am not getting it? (MS)
(Dis-illusioned)

ROTUNDA – "Spitting Feathers" CD

This band says they are street punk but it sounds more like melodic pop punk from the UK with a streetpunk edge. Some songs are like all the pop punk I hear blasted at crust punks houses. Other songs put traditional street punk or hardcore punk gimmicks through an Epitaph filter, there is even an acoustic ballad. It's kinda all over the place and not my thing. (AP)
(Can't Shine Shit)

SACRIFICIO – "Juventud Descerebrada" EP

I'm always happy to get a record like this in the review pile. First off, it looks great with an ugly punk drawing screen printed in four colors. SACRIFICIO play raw hardcore but they're faster than fellow Mexico punks like TERCER MUNDO: still catchy and lyrically potent, but playing more in the style of UK fastcore/thrash. Ripping shit from Mexico City with a critical message: *"recuerden, somos mierda también."* Recommended! (SZ)
(Cintas Pepe)

SEWERS – "Chain of Command/Life's A Boar"

Oh no's! An Aussie record! Cannot believe how prolific and dependable our own South Seas Prison Colony has been for the greater punk rock community over the years, but these SEWERS definitely hate civilization and will stop at nothing to obliterate it with their janky Thailand-made instruments. Always good measure to follow up a meandering shouter A-Side with a headache-inducing plodder B-Side. Kinda feel like a good vomit right now. In a good way of course. (GB)
(Tenth Court)

SEX DWARF – "Non-Erotic Noise Cabaret" 12"

This is a really hard. This Stockholm band's fifteen-song 12" is a beyond solid record. Everything is painted in the right number. Everything is kicked out with forceful vigor and succinctly fulfills the requirement of the fine-tuned amalgamation of early SKITLICKERS / ANTI-CIMEX sloppy Scandi-Noise core and the CHAOS UK–DISORDER via SWANKYS and GAI-core = hammering D-beat. Check. Distorted to infinity guitars. Check. Down the hall shouted vocals. Check. (With vocalist Per Thunell abandoning the iffy hardcore screechiness of BRUCE BANNER to recapture the brute hoarseness of his recordings with PROTES BENGT just shy of his grindier depths in FILTHY CHRISTIANS.) Swiping

their moniker from SOFT CELL as well as riffing their 12" title from their definitive synth pop LP *Non Stop Erotic Cabaret*, pilfering other people's ideas from the outset is always a giveaway a band is going to come up somewhat short of genuinely creatively engaging, but increasingly as this style has left its confines of the refined, artful mimicry that always exists within Japanese hardcore and become a worldwide sound, it seems to operate both like that; and like grind, where its sustenance is just the same ideas reheated over and over for a diehard crowd judging the nuisances of delivery and imaginative tweaks. As judged on those merits, this band is top shelf raging, the drums rampage, the vocals have a classic, crude Swedish cadence, and through the sheen of distortion, the guitar does have some playfully inventive freedom over top that does make this somewhat distinctive—and the last track in particular with its almost "locked grooved" rush to the end is particularly great. But I still feel a little empty listening to this. The Sugi (of course) drawn cover of the band members' heads being stewed in a kettle with a guitar, a crust skeleton stirring the pot, is completely idiotic. The lyrics are entirely in Swedish with one exception, with no translation or explanation. And I understand and respect Swedish bands wanting to keep their lyrical meaning directed to an immediate home audience…but then they issue records on foreign labels, tour overseas, and it becomes just…meaningless. Less hung up on this being anything more than an exercise in style and form would find this brutality in desperate need of maximum volume. (KS)
(D-Takt & Råpunk / Konton Crasher)

SEX RAYS – "She Thing/He's Trying to Work it Out With His Girlfriend, Then the LSD Kicks In"

"She Thing"? I've got to listen to this one a couple of times, if only to figure out what the song is all about. Is it just about a girl? Maybe so. Anyway, the song is pretty catchy in a sort of tempered, methodical sort of way. It's like the song just wants to explode, but it really doesn't, not quite. In the end, they tease you quite a bit, but never finish you. In a way, it's almost better because of that. The B-side starts off where the A-side almost finishes, literally. And then it quickly turns into an awesome LSD-ish instrumental trip. Super cool. (KK)
(Big Action)

SGNLS – "2" LP

This is some major new wave worship, sounding like a slicker METAL URBAIN or NERVOUS GENDER. It's synth heavy with that vocal styling that sounds either scared or demanding, landing somewhere in between OZZY OSBOURNE and GARY NEUMAN. There're moments of atmospheric synthscapes that break quick into sped up punk with some MANFRED MANN-esque guitar wankage thrown in. (MM)
(FDH)

THE SICKS – "Pretty Plastic/Dose"

This is a pure punk rock record from lifers of the Pittsburgh, PA scene. Members of KIM PHUC, the BATS, AUS ROTTEN and more have teamed up to produce what sounds, for the most part, like textbook first-wave UK punk. "Pretty Plastic" is a catchy, upbeat number with sneering vocals and licks that wouldn't be out of place on a PROFESSIONALS record, while the flip has more of an early PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED moody bleakness. Great stuff. I keep coming back to that A-side. Pretty sure you'll be seeing their shirts on Pittsburgh-area door guys for years to come. (AM)
(Fair Warning)

SICK THOUGHTS – "Beat On Beat/Fun While It Lasts"

SICK THOUGHTS might be the most prolific band in current garage punk. They've sent in multiple new records to the mag every month for the last five months or so. This whole record might be four minutes long. "Beat on Beat" is an upbeat, raging garage punk song, which sounds like it was written by a deranged maniac who has been locked in a basement for the last year. "Fun While It Lasts" is exactly that. It's a fun song, but kind of a throwaway…a classic B-side. The lyrics aren't much more that what is written in the title and the song just thuds along. No real hooks. (GH)
(Goner)

SON OF A GUN – "No Bread" LP

This is some jangly, garage moderne from a bunch of Chicagoans. I've heard the BLACK LIPS and TY SEGALL and so many others of their acolytes. I am not sure we need more of this stuff nor do I want to hear it. (CK)
(Tall Pat)

SONIC AVENUES – LP

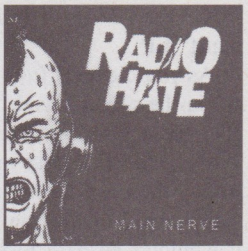
A reissue of the out-of-print 2009 debut LP from Montreal's SONIC AVENUES. Tightly wound, energetic power pop with elements of TRANZMITORS, GENTLEMAN JESSE, etc. If you've been trying to track down a vinyl copy of this gem, now's your chance. It's packed in some updated cover art and features an unreleased extra track. (AM)
(Dead Broke)

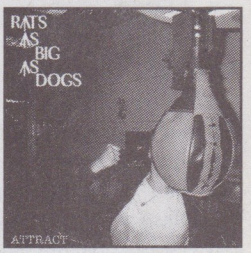
STATIC AND THE CUBES – "Escape from Snakes" EP

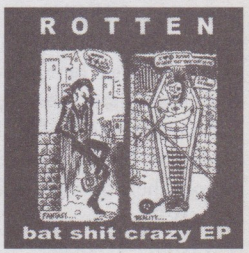
This is a bit too goofy for me. STATIC AND THE CUBES is a one-man band from Portland, OR doing sci-fi sounding music, but with songs about snakes and mice. At least the song in French is about a planet, but the lyrics could still be about the rodents on that planet. I am not sure. It is an interesting band concept, but he needs to spend some more time working on the lyrics. Features an ex-EPOXY. (CK)
(Danger)

STEVE ADAMYK BAND – "Dial Tone" LP

Hi Steve Adamyk, I reviewed one of your records once before. This LP is pretty tasty if you are into tasty items. This is like indie pop punky stuff that makes me think of a soundtrack to a skuzzy bedroom make-out scene from an edgy teenager romantic comedy flick or some shit, a lil' bubble-gummy, a lil' punky/pubby, hella catchy. A lot of times I get bored with this kinda stuff, bands get lazy and repetitive, but this has a lot of interesting hooks and twists and turns and aggro shit to grab your attention. It's even better turned up really loud. (GB)
(Dirtnap)







SUGAR STEMS – "Only Come Out at Midnight" LP

As you'd expect from any band using "sugar" in their name (aside from BROWN SUGAR) these guys are totally sweet and poppy. These guys skate that line between Punk and Indie, where you're not really sure which flag they wave. Just like the MEASURE [SA] did. It wouldn't be hard to say, "this isn't punk," although Dirtnap put out this record, which is probably why it's appearing in the pages of *MRR*. Also in the band photo, it looks like one of the members may, or may not, be wearing a MISFITS shirt (it's hard to tell). Their sound combines a mix '60s Motown, '70s SPRINGSTEEN, and '80s JOAN JETT. The catchiness is turned up to 11 and the harmonies are endless. For those punks with soft hearts out there, this may be your jam. Do you listen to CYNDI LAUPER more than you listen to NEGATIVE APPROACH? If the answer is "yes" check out SUGAR STEMS. (FS)
(Dirtnap)

SVFFER – "Lies We Live" LP

Fucking *powerhouse* shit right here. Following up on a great 7", Münster's SVFFER crank out some mighty fine Euro-style powerviolence/HC, with an endless supply of headbangable riffs, blasts and breakdowns. Sharing personnel and at least some of the massive sonic territory explored by ALPINIST (one of the greatest… of all time), they shift effortlessly from intricate neocrust rhythms to mosh-grind push-pull and back again, never faltering, while stunning shrieked vocals build an ongoing sense of pain and desperation. The intertwining of brutality and melody will be familiar to connoisseurs of modern German hardcore, but SVFFER is carving out their own place in the canon with this one. (WB)
(Per Koro / Vendetta)

SYSTEMATIC DEATH – "The Moon Watches" LP

Ooooh, fuck. What can I say about a band that's been ripping out near-faultless hardcore since almost before I was born? I guess just that it's a goddamn honor to have the privilege to tell you that this is a great LP, even a step or two ahead of 2009's *Annie's Full Swing Systema 6* LP. Hell, "Out" might be the best thing these guys have written in the new millennium, with "Goddam" being a candidate as well! The classic SYSTEMATIC DEATH sound is in full effect here, driven by the machine-tight bass and drums, which stop and start on a dime, and the uniquely rock'n'roll guitar sound that's always separated the band from their contemporaries. If classic skank break at the end of "Tora" doesn't get you moving, I don't know what's wrong with you, especially given the flawless way it leads in to the jaunty bass intro of "Get Along". The only slightly false note this album strikes is "Be Blue", their tribute to the nationalistic *Yamato-damashii* spirit that doesn't sit quite right with the album's other themes of struggling against the system, unity and the power of love. But fuck it, I seriously doubt that SYSTEMATIC DEATH have transformed into Emperor-worshipers, I'm probably just missing out on a bit of context anyway. In a perfect world every punk on Earth would buy this record. Grandmaster-level shit. (AU)
(Way Back When)

THULSA DOOM – "The P.C. EP" EP

I don't think TULSA DOOM needs an introduction, but for y'all who don't know, they are/were a really prominent late '90s New York crust band that reformed a couple of years ago (not to be confused with the stoner rock band of the same name). Melodic crust with female vocals lyrics that can get corny at times, singing about pizza pie and some problematic shit. "Pretentious Cunts" has the lyric: "I'm not mad that they're queer/I just wonder what the trend will be next year." I understand the feeling of not being punk enough, I just think there is a better way to say it than calling the positive inclusion of queers in punk as a trend (we've been here since the beginning). Either way, cool to hear a release by a band I grew up listening to even though they just pulled the "I'm not homophobic, but.." of punk. (AP)
(Rotten to the Core)

TIT – 12"

Minimal synth collab by the dudes from DIGITAL LEATHER and the HUSSY. Lo-fi synthscapes backup pop tinged riffs and monotone vocals that would make KRAFTWERK proud. The B-Side to this record is just an instrumental that spans its title "8m 50s" which can only be described as a synth/psych rock jam. This is cool but I am really getting more late '90s/early '00s FAINT vibes than, like, classic minimal wave. (AP)
(FDH / Volar)

TNT – "The Complete Recordings" 2xLP

How do you write about something that is so classically and recognizably and purely *punk*? That has the '77 *je ne sais quoi* bands have been trying (and failing) to recapture ever since? Such an easily mimicked but almost never mastered form. "You know it when you see it." TNT could have left this world after their perfect first song ("Züri Brännt" [Zurich's Burning], an obvious nod that leaves London in the dust) and they would have been untouchable, but instead they gifted us four great singles, all compiled here along with a small group of live and unreleased demo / practice space recordings. The centerpiece of the band is the teenage frontwoman, Sara Schär, a vocalist on the level of POLY STYRENE in terms of power, melody, and might. She sings ("Remember," "Subway-scene"); she shouts ("Razzia," "They Robbed Us"). Her vocals are timeless, instantly familiar. This is a band for endless mixtapes, pogoing around the *Maximum* kitchen, permanent earworms that feel as if they have been lodged into your brain since birth. If you aren't already a fan of this classic Swiss group, this impeccably packaged double LP is the perfect chance to change that. Housed in a beautiful gatefold sleeve, it comes with two huge poster inserts, one in German and one in English. One side is an interview conducted by Stascha Bader for *Wah Wah* fanzine in 1979; the flip is an interview (also by Bader) that took place September 16, 2013, 35 years to the day from the band's first practice. A thoughtful and essential release. If you like punk, you'll like this. Promise. (GA)
(Static Age)

TOM AND BOOT BOYS – "Old Punk Generation" EP

For most of their career, TOM AND BOOT BOYS has been a fairly predictable commodity: super-dumb, super-catchy street punk for kids of all ages who don't give a fuck. This recording, a long-overdue vinyl reissue of a CDEP from 2008 is something of an exception to that rule, being by far the most hardcore stuff in their discography, probably due to the bass work of Ricky from EXTINCT GOVERNMENT, who lends these tracks a dirty heavy feel. "I Hate Family" is as close to a straight-up hardcore song as this band ever did, and even the old classic "Oi! Boy Oi! Girl" has a nasty raw edge here. This one's not just for the charged hair and 40 oz. brigade, it's a legitimate ripper that will appeal to the hardcore punks as well. "Fuck new style punk forever"…words to live by. (AU)
(Fear of War)

TRAFFIC DEATH – "Don't Be A Projectile" LP

Strait out of De Moines, Iowa, TRAFFIC DEATH's first album *Don't Be A Projectile* is decent offering of '90s powerviolence or '80s thrash metal. They do both styles well, but instead of blending elements from each style they kind of just switch back and forth. Are you guys SLAYER or INFEST? It leaves me feeling a little disjointed. That being said, these guys are pretty rockin'. Songs about getting hit by cars, fighting with drivers and VHS tapes. When all is said and done, a pretty good time. (BA)
(Vehicular Genocide)

TRASHCAN DANCE – "Reptile Heart" LP

A fat middle-aged man finds himself on vacation in Finland. He's there hoping to catch RÄJÄYTTÄJÄT live, but instead he's captured and thrown into a situation closely mirroring

those bullshit *Hostel* films. After a period of unconsciousness, the man finds himself locked in a disco, zonked on amyl nitrate and wearing a less-than-flattering amalgam of mesh, leather and rubber. The lights come up and TRASHCAN DANCE, his captors, are in the midst playing a private torture session. Their blend of less-than-deviant '80s goth-punk and '90s rawk horseshit causes him to vomit uncontrollably through his ball-gag. He's shat and pissed his bike shorts. He wonders how PHANTOM LIMBS got it so right, yet TRASHCAN DANCE get it so wrong. The band plays for what seems like a month and then sets him free on some nearby riverbank, totally nude other than novelty fake blood and glitter caking his rotund frame. After few moments of sobbing reflection, the man drowns himself to kill the memory of the pain he just endured. The end. (MC)
(self-released)

THE TY SEGALL BAND – "Live in San Francisco" LP

I've never really found the appeal of live records, to be honest, and this one is no exception. I get that the energy is different than studio versions of the songs and on top of that; the recording quality is real clear and crisp here, but I don't see it as necessary. The set list for this show is almost entirely *Slaughterhouse* and *Twins* cuts, and I guess what really appeals to me about Ty's records are the subtleties and a real talent for crafting a "good tune," especially on *Twins* whereas the appeal of this one leans more towards an overwhelmingly heavy power, more akin to the FUZZ LP, like a yin to the yang. If you're just looking more Ty, this is recommended; if not, stick with the albums. (JU)
(Castle Face)

ULCEROUS PHLEGM – "Phlegm As A Last Consequence" LP

With a SABBATH-like intro, this discography from Germany's ULCEROUS PHLEGM quickly oozes into rigor-tortuous death metal, which I believe was totally overlooked in its time. Superb blood and guts churning grind for fans of early CARCASS, AGOTHACLES, EXTREME NOISE TERROR, and SOB. Everything is mixed as low as possible with sick changes and bulldozing riffs. The production is heavy as hell—it almost sounds like it should be on 45. This punk-thrash-gore grind feels gnarly raw by today's polished grind standards. It's gross, from primitive blasts to more complex death metal for ENTOMBED or NIHILIST fans. Seek this out for something intense and guttural if you're into the late '80s noisy spectrum from the UK, or the early '90s death scene in Scandinavia. This LP is even reminescent of the darkest NYHC bands going on around that time. These rough recordings are for mad grindheads that want their NASUM/SCUM-punk heavy as possible. (JR)
(Power It Up)

URBAN SAVAGE – "Let Thunder Roar" LP

Having more in common with the rock'n'roll approach of BATTLE RUINS, the tone of early BLITZ, and the prowess of PROXY than the hardcore bands HARDER TIDER or SKIT KIDS members also play in. URBAN SAVAGE have hit us with a somber album of Oi! stained anthems that resonate long after the music stops. The CRIMINAL DAMAGE comparison cannot be understated as hooks and melody pepper the tracks of monotone vocals and blunt, politically bent lyrics. The bass takes leads at will and songs with mini piano, pick slides and drum tracks elicit fist pumps and pogo attacks start to finish. The production on the album is the low point, failing to match the quality of songs and diminishing the impact of the record as a whole. Because of the layered musical style and direct pace of the songs it is easy to get hung up on small inconsistencies or unappealing nuances. For such an ambitious project it is an unfortunate detail. All in all a great record and definitely looking forward to more! (RM)
(self-released)

VIOLENT CHARGE – "Demo Live & Lambruscore" LP

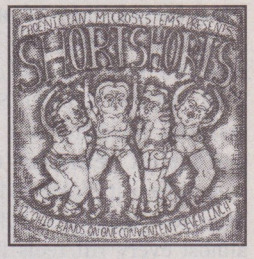
Another nearly long lost band's demo tape gets a proper vinyl reissue. VIOLENT CHARGE, from Poviglio, dropped their demo of raw and simple punk in an edition of 300 copies in 1986. I find it to be far less exciting than most of the classic Italian hardcore bands, but I'm sure they were fun to pogo to in their day. Some of the more mid tempo songs sound catchier to me. The live stuff on side B has a considerably more urgent and aggressive sound, especially vocally. I'm gonna have to put this LP in the "for completists only" category. (MA)
(Queer Pills)

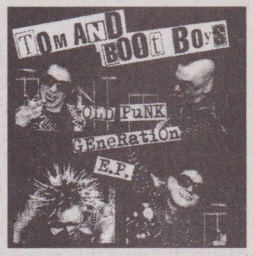
VISIONS OF WAR – "Swine Parade" CD

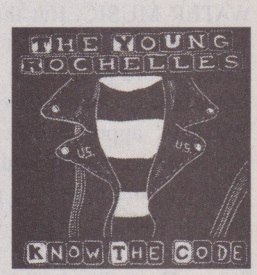
A two-for-one deal combining the last couple of LPs from these Belgian crustcore stalwarts, this is an unrelenting forty-five minutes of metallic D-beat peppered with samples and some nicely varied vocal work. First off is 2011's *Shit Parade,* which leans towards the thick, burly side of käng with the drums sounding absolutely massive and kicks especially high in the mix. The production feels more balanced on *Kings of Swine* from 2013, and there's a cool distant feel to the fuzzed-out guitars. I figured the stars must have aligned when I saw their reference to the suicidal Kirillov from Doestoevsky's *Demons*, which I just so happen to be finishing this week. Not every song is a banger, but when they hit their stride it's absolute wrecking ball status. Respect. (WB)
(Apathy Never / Deviance / Power It Up)

VOICE OF ADDICTION – "Modern Day Meltdown" CD EP

A four-song CD EP from this Chicago band. Although they have been around ten or so years I am not familiar with them. Apparently they do lots of touring too. Pretty much political melodic punk somewhere in the vein of BAD RELIGION with some of A WILHELM SCREAM chops and guitar heroics, and maybe a tad of AGAINST ME! at times. From what I can tell some previous releases were also self-released. Decent. (RL)
(self-released)







WAR EMBLEM – "Constant Defeat" LP

Vocally driven and extremely anthemic hardcore from members of SAETIA and KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS (among others), this honestly isn't really my thing, but that doesn't mean I don't know a great record when I hear it. WAR EMBLEM is the kind of band record nerds will love picking over, as almost every riff feels familiar without ever approaching the dreaded retro/knockoff zone. There's some moments of D-beat/crust in the mix, especially when those sizzlin' melodic leads that crop up, but mostly this is just good ol' fashioned American hardcore punk. And yeah, they do a fucking spot-on job. (WB)
(Narshardaa)

WATCH YOUR BACK – "Sonic Hate" EP

Besides the insert photo of the band drinking beer, these guys don't live up to any of the stereotypes of Finnish hardcore at all. This is super-burly fast-and-loud shit that has a lot in common with *Blank Blackout Vacant*-era POISON IDEA. The thick recording does the band a world of good, really maximizing the impact of their two guitar attack (the drums sound amazing too!). When they let the rock'n'roll loose in the leadup to "Flatline" I was definitely feeling it. Unfortunately the bland graphics will probably cause a few people to flip past this record, but rest assured that behind the uninspiring exterior there's a solid slab of venomous hardcore to be had. (AU)
(Watch Your Back)

WEAK TEETH – "So You've Ruined Your Life" LP

This high-charged, emotionally packed record gallops and screams through silly song titles and provocative but easily dismissed lyrical content. Most immediately the band struck me as in line with melodic punk, a less refined PROPAGHANDHI or far more pissed HOT WATER MUSIC. But those comparisons are far from accurate, a fact which became clear as the record pressed on and my first impressions faded. Once the complexity of WEAK TEETH's approach became more apparent it was easier to listen although the tiresome vocal screams tested my patience from beginning to end. So it's no coincidence that the instrumental track, "Providence Music Scene Soccer Camp Trophy," at the end of the record is a highlight and was a welcomed change up to an otherwise overcooked album. Falling somewhere between SKIN LIKE IRON and TOUCHE AMORE, WEAK TEETH deliver a powerful if not overzealous sophomore release. (RM)
(Tor Johnson)

WIREHEADS – "The Late Great" LP

This record would appear to be named in tribute to a Townes Van Zandt LP; forcing yourself into the canon by any means necessary? It's got a rollicking wild feel, brash and confident and aggro. Parts bring to mind the second SAINTS LP, manic and driven reconstructed r'n'r with an out-of-controller vocalist...Unhinged and brawling, every song is a tumbling drunkards walk, it's almost too much. Well except for "The Way It Is," which is essentially the riff from "Frantic Romantic" slowed down even more, with added flute and violin. The violin is a constant throughout, played vicious-style like a wildman attacking a guitar, but I think I woulda dug this more if it was a little more restrained in that respect? If the violin was just a little *less*. This is a cool record, with *Orstralian* appeal, and if you want some nasty but art tinged raucousness for the late winter drag, this could be the ticket. I am conflicted on where I stand in terms of actually liking this, obviously it's a good record, but I am just not sure if I wanna listen to it again?! A weird feeling! Probably a good sign?! (LG)
(Format)

WITCHING WAVES – "Fear of Falling Down" LP

The stark black and white cover depicts two people shadowed beneath a brutalist tower block, perhaps referencing *This is the Modern World,* but it could be a Penguin paperback circa 1965, or the picture sleeve from a post-punk 45 circa '79... Evocative and resonate, giving a sense of the possibility of the sounds contained within. WITCHING WAVES summon a heady, urgent mix of Pacific Northwest burners and Scottish pop dreamers in a most dreamy / doomed manner. This record somehow feels discomforting and comforting at the same time, like it's part of a long continuum of eternal sounds; the guitar attack of the WIPERS, "Now is the time / When is the truth", even some Fred Cole-isms, shot through with (darkened) VASELINES and BEAT HAPPENING bash and clatter. The way Emma and Mark's voices play off each other really heightens that feeling. The songs are perfect constructions of focus and destruction, like hearing characters from a 1960s kitchen sink drama stepping out of the screen and into the basement studio. This came out last month so it just missed the year end top ten cut off, but it is one of the records of the year for me. I can't stop listening to it. (LG)
(Soft Power)

THE YOUNG ROCHELLES – "Know the Code" EP

Okay, I wasn't expecting this...'90s style pop punk in the vein of BEATNIK TERMITES and SQUIRTGUN. I could be easily fooled into believing that this came out on *Lookout* in 1995. All three songs incorporate RAMONES-style drumming, perfectly distorted guitars (complete with harmonic-chord hooks), and pitch-perfect vocal harmonies. If you missed the pop punk of the mid-'90s, THE YOUNG ROCHELLES are here to drag you back in time. The cover art is a really nice looking linocut of a leather jacket. (GH)
(Greenway)

V/A – "Screaming for A Better Future" Vol. 4 LP

European benefit comp loaded with bands I was not previously familiar with. APURTU, DOWN TO KILL and CARTOUCHE have all been welcomed into my life through this LP packed with heavy hardcore (KANSALAISTOTTELEMATTOMUUS), catchy anthemic punk (LOS DISCKOLOS, WICKED), quirky garage (SAIGOONS) and other assorted subgenres. The two bands I was already familiar with, Poland's EYE FOR AN EYE and Finalnd's KOVAA RASVAA, deliver far and away my favorite tracks, both screaming hardcore with devastating female vocals—the former well-crafted and melodic and the latter a pure power low end heavy attack. Sixteen bands, and only a couple of clunkers. (WN)
(Campary / John Steam)

V/A – "Short Shorts Volume One" EP

Conceptually this is a fine release, representing a dozen bands I was mostly unfamiliar with, all presumably from the Cleveland area and each playing a one-minute track. Musically it's a mixed bag, but short enough to not overdo it anywhere: a lot of Dangerhouse Records sounds, first wave weirdo punk with touches of garage, no wave and other stuff but altogether a shared snotty vein throughout the whole compilation. Sure it verges on offensive schlock in a couple spots, but if you already like BLACK RANDY you're probably not going to take any of this too seriously. Some of these songs could be passed off as recently unearthed KBD classics: see DITCH PARROT's "Too Many Hitlers" or KILL THE HIPPIES' "Audible Pang." All of the bands pitched in to release this with the label and it shows in the fluid, collaborative feel to the finished product. I didn't plan on liking this, but I can't deny its charm. (SZ)
(Phoenician Microsystems)

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A World We Never Made: aworldwenevermade.bandcamp.com
A.D.D.: addrecs.com
All Gone: allgone.bigcartel.com
Alphabet Cult: dsix.bandcamp.com
Anti-Psychotics: facebook.com/theantipsychotics
Artificial Head: PO Box 890882, Houston, TX 77289, governorchavez@yahoo.com
Beach Impediment: PO Box 8335, Virginia Beach, VA 23450
Beef Jerk: beefjerk.bandcamp.com, beefjerkmate@gmail.com
Black Wednesday: swistak85@poczta.onet.pl
Boner: PO Box 2081, Berkeley, CA 94702
Campary: campary-rec.de, campary-rec@web.de
Can't Shine Shit: 311 Blossomfield Road Solihull B911TE, UNITED KINGDOM
Carbonated Sounds: carbonatedrecords.bandcamp.com
Castle Face: castlefacerecords.com
Chapter 11: chapterelevenrecords.com
Contraszt!: diyordie.net
Cool Death: cooldeathrecords.blogspot.com
Corpitus: corpitus.com
The Dahmers: TheDahmers666@gmail.com
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Dead Broke: 139 Huber Ave., Holbrook, NY 11741, deadbrokerecords.com
Deranged: c/o Gordon Dufresne, 2700 Lower Rd, Roberts Creek, BC V0N 2W4, CANADA, derangedrecords.com
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Distort: distortcult.blogspot.com
Drunken Sailor: drunkensailorrecords.co.uk
D-Takt & Råpunk: dbeatrawpunk.blogspot.com
Emotional Response: emotional-response-recs.bandcamp.com
End Sounds: PO Box 684743, Austin, TX 78768, endsounds.com
Fair Warning: fairwarningrecords.bandcamp.com
Farsot: farsotfarsot.tumblr.com
Fat Wreck: 2196 Palou Ave, San Francisco, CA 94124, fatwreck.com
FDH: c/o Eric Hansen, 522 Hoffman St., Philadelphia, PA 19148, erictheill@yahoo.com
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Pumpkin: facebook.com/pumpkinrecordsuk
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Volar: volarrecords.blogspot.com
Warthog Speak: 2109 23rd St., San Francisco, CA, 94107, warthogspeak.com
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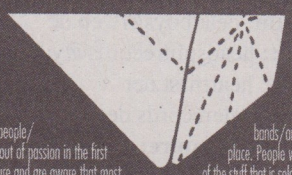

We like to meet people/ bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

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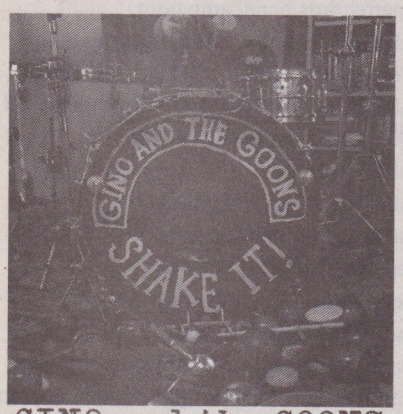

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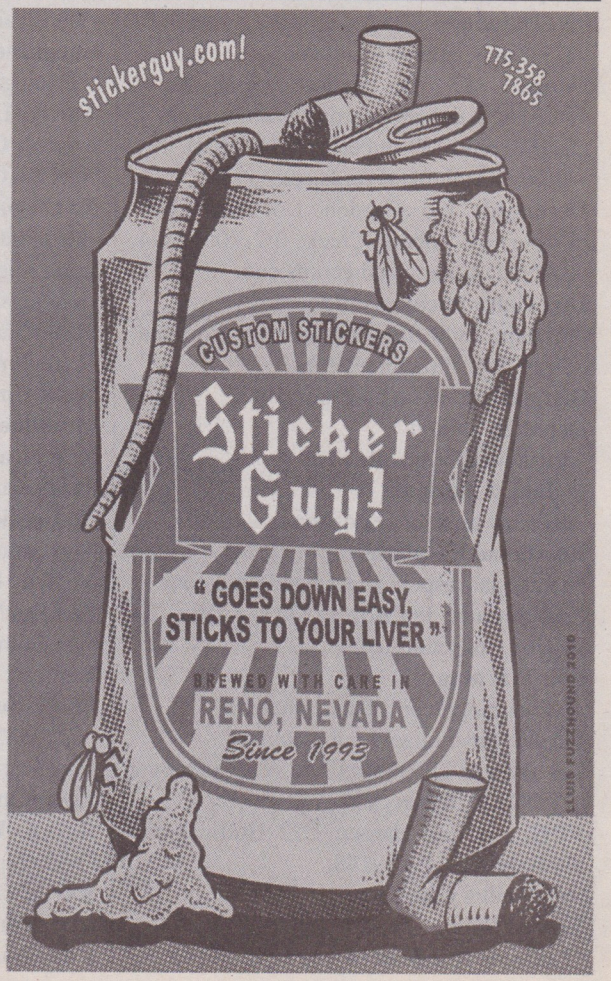

DEMOS

Send cassettes and CD-Rs to: MRR Attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please provide contact information and a post-paid price! Please note, anything other than vinyl or CD will be reviewed in this section. CD-Rs with no artwork will not be considered. Reviews by Vanessa Asswipe, Matt Badenhop, Heather Blotto, Greg Harvester, Mike Leslie, Sean Nieves-Quiñones, Jason Ryan, Andrew Underwood, and Shit Zoo.

ABRADE – *Homage* – Powerviolence from the Midwest that leans hard towards the death/grindcore side of the genre. This tape opens up with a more death metal influenced number that segues into the breakneck blasting you were expecting. You may have heard the formula before—heavy, fast, heavy—and its many variations. ABRADE doesn't stray far, but they do it and do it well. The tape was originally released in 2007, with a thank-you list that takes longer to read than it does to listen to both sides of the tape. (Sean) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, thrashinyoface@aol.com, abrade773.bandcamp.com)

ALCOHOL FUELED – Straightforward streetpunk with enough sincerity and hooks to keep the circle pit going all night, or at least until everyone runs out of booze and passes out with their boots on. The nihilism of embracing something as self-destructive as alcoholism is not lost on these guys, who seem to be self-aware in the project of turning anger at the world into fun—in the form of getting shitfaced and running from the cops. Cynical and catchy, in the vein of early GRIMPLE, FILTH or (gasp) early RANCID. Really feelin' the "poison in our head and punk is in our heart" sentiment over here. (Heather) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, alcoholfueled1.bandcamp.com)

AMERICAN – *Coping With Loss* – Deceivingly contemporary hardcore in aesthetic, AMERICAN, as an audio collection, is psycho. Dark and clean guitars fill out the songs with strange distant ghastly and robotic sampling. This two-piece from Virginia has recorded disturbing blackened lost-core with riveting blasts and depressive strings. The uniqueness of AMERICAN is their incorporation of delicate and morose interludes and technocratic soundscapes. A crackle here, a hiss there. A siren howl finalizes the ambient doom. Recommended for avant-garde blackened noise conesseurs. Stay away from this if you've cried recently or don't remember who you are. (Jason) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, sentinentruin.com, facebook.com/americanvirginia)

ANEURYSM – Thick rock'n'roll punk with trashed-out vocals and some darkness. It has too much groove to be labeled as garage punk, but it has garage-type production qualities. A few good bass and vocal hooks shine through, but it mostly washes over me. The art and layout kinda looks cool, are overall inconsistent and confusing. Solid, but not exciting. (Matt) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, aneurysm666.bandcamp.com)

ANIMAL PLANET – ANIMAL PLANET plays full on hardcore with a cleaner guitar sound than I expected when the songs hit me…like somewhere between DEAD KENNEDYS and YOUNG WASTENERS. The drummer plays a wild style that really works to set this band apart from your typical hardcore band. The vocals are shouted and sound like they're projected from deep within the diaphragm, but are super hard to understand, even with the aid of a lyric sheet! This band is going for it and killing it. (Greg / Mike) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, animalplanetpunk.bandcamp.com)

BANDA MUERTA – This tape is great! Cool, mid-tempo garage punk from Granada with hooks for days. The singer has an awesome voice…totally shouting but in tune and really forceful. It reminds me a little bit of the singer from LA URRS, but with less dynamics. Some of the songs are more anthemic with a dream-like quality and wonderful sing-alongs. The whole thing has a great, blown-out sounding production that feels raw and urgent. So good! Members of COPYCATS and CARNE. (Greg / Mike) (7-song tape cassette, lyrics not included, bandamuerta@gmail.com)

BIG JOANIE – *Sistah Punk* – BIG JOANIE is from London and plays minimalist, sparse punk / post-punk. At times, it sounds like they are pulling influences from both early K records and minimal '60s UK pop. Upon first listen, I wasn't really a fan of how the guitarist only played a few notes here and there, but after a few spins, I noticed how they were playing really insistent notes and how those few notes formed the real hook of the songs while the vocals carried a definitive melody. Throughout the songs, the drums hold down a less-than-mid-tempo thudding beat while the bass filled out the sound. The vocals are clear and deep. I actually didn't like this at first but it grew on me as I listened to it over and over. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, bigjoanie.tumblr.com, bigjoanieband@gmail.com)

BLACK MONUMENTS – This is really good and possibly British! I love bands that mess with a conservative format. This is hardcore punk with bass, drums, synthesizer and singing. Everything sounds pretty blown-out, and the song structures are pretty interesting. Keep it up! (Mike) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, letsgodosomecrimes.com)

CAT JELLY – Considering I chose this CD-R based on the cover art (a crude drawing of cats—one jamming a guitar, one with a backwards hat and drumsticks blowing a cloud of smoke, and the third removing its intestines—positioned over a background of unappetizing-looking pizza photos), I'm unpredictably kind of into this. Reno's CAT JELLY's five tracks offer up a variety of rambling but catchy mid-paced punk tunes. They are quirky, but not to a fault. My favorite, "3 Cat Orgy," features a rudimentary chromatic but kinda surfy guitar line fronted by a cacophony of echoing cats. Sold. (Matt) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, catjelly.bandcamp.com)

CLOUD RAT – *Discography Boxset* – Ripping and fucking furious grind heavies from Michigan get the discography treatment, four years of releases spanning two tapes. Bursts of explosive rage, bordering on frenzied desperation are peppered with enough breakdowns, melody, spoken word, and NEIL YOUNG covers (that somehow work) to have me make it through both of the tapes, all 54 songs, tonight. (Pat) (54-song double cassette, lyrics included, brainswell.bigcartel.com)

CRAB LEGS – *Vegan Jeff Rides Again* – Music made to break a sweat to while clapping over your head with 25 of your friends in a living room, which sounds like it's made by (really nice) people who are (super) into DIY, but also JAWBREAKER. If you are inspired by gang vocals, wear wristbands to protect your P-bass from sweat, and are eagerly awaiting the next OFF WITH THEIR HEADS release, grab this. Better yet, come to my house and you can have this copy. (Pat) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, brainswell.bigcartel.com)

DETESTADOS – *Hardcorridos* – Punky and at times garage-y hardcore from Austin, TX full of side to side mosh vibes and 1-2, 1-2 thrash beats. Their use of major key barre chords makes me think of WICCANS, another band from ATX. The lyrics are sung in a throaty Spanish, touching on hopelessness, corruption, and violence. I wouldn't mind seeing this band rage in a sweaty, nasty, dusty basement in the near future. Mega bonus points for quoting a Neruda poem in the lyrics! (Sean) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, detestados.bandcamp.com)

EKSTRAKTION – Ripping D-beat with ripping solos in every ripping song! Delayed vocals shouting about torture, resistance, nuclear annihilation and enslavement (as well as a good *oof* that closes out a couple songs). Not really *my* thing but sure to be a hit with many folks. I mean, there's a skeleton hand made of human skulls on this thing! This tape was included in a rubber band with the aforementioned DETESTADOS tape, proclaiming that they too are from Austin. (Sean) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, ekstraktion.bandcamp.com)

EVAPORATED BRAIN – There's nothing about this Atlanta band that doesn't sound like CELTIC FROST. The vocals impersonate Tom G. almost to a T. The riffs, drumming, solos…all channeling the simple but punishing style captured on albums like *Morbid Tales* and *Emperor's Return*. While it's already expertly crafted, EVAPORATED BRAIN still manages to add a few fun details to update their take a bit. Fans of the style will flip over this. (Matt) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, Scavenger Of Death, 1396 Normandy Dr. NE #1, Atlanta, GA 30306)

FLEXEYE – *Spazztic Demonstration* – I don't frequently troll through the demo bin, but the siren song of this gem caught my ear and I was lucky enough to grab this super-fun tape from one of the most loveable Japanese bands going. Total everything-and-the-kitchen-sink-core, reggae jams butting up against wild garage thrash and BEASTIE BOYS covers (for the record, it's a punked-up "Egg Raid on Mojo"). If you've dug bands like U.G. MAN or BREAKFAST in the past or are currently worshiping at the altar of SUN CHILDREN SUN like you should be, FLEXEYE are right up your alley. I am pleased to see that they've kept up their interest in traditional hygiene as well, dedicating two songs to the topic ("Bathing Etiquette" and "Get Back to Old Skool Onsen") in keeping with their previous epics on the subject. The skit (?) on the B-side could very well be hilarious, but my Japanese is non-existent so I couldn't tell you. (9-song cassette, lyrics not included but killer art and sticker are, flexeye@hotmail.co.jp)

DEMOS

FUCK-ISHIMA – *First Come, First Served* – This tape is from Finland but all the song titles are in English. I don't know what language the lyrics are in, the vocals are mixed low and there is a lot of yelling! I thought this was a noise project at first but then the low-end chugga-chugga hardcore started up. There was one song that punctuated all the vocals with a discordant guitar squeal, I like that. This tape has samples (in English and Spanish) and noisy outros and intros. The MAN IS A BASTARD twinkly sound is featured. (Mike) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, fuck-ishima.bandcamp.com sludgeordie@gmail.com)

FUCKING HEADACHE – *Head Cleaner* – Punk hardcore out of Pittsburgh that reminds you that even people who sound awesome feel just as shitty as you do. Dissonant chord progressions give the songs an uncomfortable sense of tension and urgency. It's probably a good tape to sharpen your knife or pull your hair out to. The artwork is gruesome and suicide-themed. The vocals are convincinglydisturbed,andperhapsunintentionally channel Nick Blinko/RUDIMENTARY PENI. The track "Rotten, Infected, and Broken," has two minutes of breakdown-tempo reasons-not-to-kill-yourself followed by a short burst of fuck-everything. Do not miss out on this gritty hardcore gem. (Heather) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, $4ppd in the US, more overseas, 5031 Ampere St., Pittsburgh, PA 15207, fuckingheadache.bandcamp.com, fnheadachepgh@gmail.com)

HEADLESS RATS – *Off With Their Heads* – This band are of a Boston 2014 vintage, but if you told me it was a lost demo from Sweden circa the '90s or Portland circa the '00s I'd totally buy it. Thick mid-tempo D-beat with a heaping helping of crust in the mix. The strong, bellowed vox are a nod to their Northeastern heritage, dramatically supported by some sick strangled back up vocals. Meanwhile the heavy bass tone is totally Gothenburg '95 style and the quick well-placed leads wouldn't be out of place on a WARCRY recording. Killer cover of everyone's favorite DRILLER KILLER song ("Alcoholocaust," duh) rounds out a very solid tape. (Andrew) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, headlessratspunk.bandcamp.com, headlessratspunk@gmail.com)

HEALERS – *Time is a Vulture That is Always Circling* – Oakland's most popular band—I'm still cleaning up the mess from the show they played at my house last week. HEALERS are what the SCREAMERS would sound like if they weren't crazy and on drugs. Gothy new wave music that's perfect to listen to while you hide away for the winter. This is a nice release that looks and sounds good. The demo comes with a mini zine done by their singer Nick, who is my favorite flyer artist right now. The band also tours a lot and contains members of BITTER FRUIT and MOIRA SCAR, so check 'em out if they come to your town, you won't regret it. (Vanessa) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, healers.bandcamp.com)

HOLLOW-EYED – These four dudes play in the style of the "indie rock," drawing particularly from Louisville and Chicago in the early '90s like RODAN. A huge highlight is the cool spooky faux Theremin B sci-fi movie lead that closes the second song. I get SLINT, BLONDE REDHEAD, and ENGINE DOWN feels from much of this. The thing that throws me the most is the vocals, which are oddly nasal and deep at the same time. If you like yr shit moody, angular and a lil quirky, check it out. (Sean) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, download code included, hollow-eyed.bandcamp.com)

HOUSE SOUNDS – *Interrobang* – Jaunty melodic indie rock from Chicago (cute reference to HOUSE SOUND OF CHICAGO!? I don't know). There are some moments that nod to '70s hard rock or prog which particularly stand out, as well as some neat beat repeat-type vocal effects. A really enjoyable aspect of the songs is the rhythmic dynamics, which guide you from point A to F to however far yr into the alphabet yr willing to go with these fellas, so kudos to the bassist and drummer. The guitars are pretty effects laden with delays and chorus, blending into the synth sounds to form a dreamy ectoplasm over the rhythm section's Fleischer Bros skeleton. I'll be honest: I picked this out of the bin because I'm a huge fan of the punctuation mark and Sharon Cheslow's zine of the same name, but I always forget if the exclamation or the question mark comes first. (Sean) (8-song cassette, no lyrics included, housesounds.bandcamp.com)

HUMAN BODIES – *No Life* – I picked this up thinking maybe it was related to HEILIG TOD since it shares virtually the same artwork as their EP from a couple years ago, but HUMAN BODIES plays more in the blackened crust style (read: more punk). It's good, bleak and driving riffs with minimal lyrics. I dig the straightforward black metal parts that flare up amidst the crust stompers though. (Shit) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, hmn.bds@gmail.com)

JAG OUT! – *Holiday in Jamaica* – My number one complaint about this tape is that the title is misleading. A holiday in Jamaica? More like a holiday in Hell. I was expecting some ska or reggae inspired songs but instead got some crazy D-beat, equipped with rar rar rar vocals. Six songs to get your testosterone racing. (Vanessa) (6 song cassette, lyrics not included, runstate.tapes@gmail.com)

JAMIE AND THE DEBT – *No, Life Isn't* – This debut from a one-woman solo project is kind of a synthy-trashy mess…sometimes in a good way… sometimes in a not good way. The instrumentation is a thin drum machine backing up some keyboards and a willfully sloppy and distorted guitar. The vocals are shouted in a bratty (not meant as an insult) and insistent way. With song titles like "Thursday Morning Abortion" and "Hurt Me," I really wish there was a lyric sheet, but most of the words are fairly easy to understand. *"I got debt to the ceiling and depression to the floor"* is a pretty sick line. This tape is super messy but also really fun. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, jamieandthedebt.bandcamp.com)

LUNGLUST – *As Guilt Collects Dust* – A very modern hardcore sounding recording, that feels like it will go chugga-chugga but doesn't. The vocals are very throat shredding and there are two guitars doing a lot. The lyrics are stories—one's about hit and running the shadow man in the street and the relief and guilt of getting away with it. Others delve into crooked priests and a revenge fantasy. Very heavy and practically metal. (Mike) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, lunglust@gmail.com)

MEATBAG – *Punk is a Black Hole to Avoid* – Pure bile in the vocals and hissy feedback from the guitar are held together by a perfectly stupid and stomping rhythm section. Parts of this tape remind me of the early DRY-ROT records. I love it. Noise punk coupled with some mutant hardcore, MEATBAG are another great band from Boston that I am lucky enough to get to review, but even luckier that I got to share a show with last month. After their set I overheard some audience punkers remark: "All I heard was some feedback and what sounded like fucked-up video game sound effects." Well done MEATBAG, keep it coming. (Shit) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, necklacingma@gmail.com)

MODERN PROBLEMS – I was never straightedge, but I fucking loved UNIFORM CHOICE and MODERN PROBLEMS are heavily influenced by them. As a result, I am very down with this tape: earnest hardcore with UNIFORM CHOICE-style vocals pulled off to the best effect. There is a very fine line to this style for me, but MODERN PROBLEMS fall firmly on the better side of it. Flophouse sent this in a few months ago and it was, sadly, accidentally blank, but I'm glad I got another chance to hear it. Another solid release. "What do we have when the core is rotten?" Think about it. (Shit) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, modernproblemsxxx@gmail.com)

PERVERTS AGAIN – *All Over Again* – Some screwy Clevo punk with a rubbery vocal effect. It's got similar sound qualities to DAWN OF HUMANS, but with a much more relaxed and nearly dirge-like feel. It's twisted and bizarre, but not as perverted as I expected – at least not in a sexual sense. Fucking weird though, for sure. (Matt) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, Turbine Piss Records, 1293 W. 111th Street, Cleveland, OH 44102)

PUSHIN' IT 2 THE LIMIT – *Pump Up the Shred* – The cover of PUSHIN' IT 2 THE LIMIT's demo features a pink/zebra Pegasus (zebracus?), a ram/tiger (riger), and a snake/hyena—no wait, it's just a dragon (?)—in combat. The inside cover also features portraits of the three members. The art and music make a "complete package," in that it is all done by the band. The music is pop punk mostly about heartache with more rock clichés than I normally like, but with very interesting guitar and bass parts too—kind of a mixed bag. I really liked that they say the name of each (mostly) incredibly long song title before it plays, not just so you know your place in the recording, but because it adds to what seemed like a actual fun time recording. I really like that they have a theme song (every band should). Probably not going to listen to this again, but I can't say I didn't like it. (Mike) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, audreycrash@gmail.com)

RIDGWAYS – *Fast Times at Ridgway High* – QUEERS-influenced Midwest pop-punk. The tape starts out with a seriously catchy song with infectious SUPERCHUNK-esque guitar leads, but then degrades into a sadly hopeful mush where you keep waiting for the chorus to happen. In the second song, "Gender Bender," the singer cries out in horror due to an unexpected sexual encounter with a trans woman, exclaiming, "A girl turned into a guy? I'm gonna die!" The thing is, bro, that you are not gonna die as a result of this probably-fictional experience. However, so many trans women are brutally murdered every year that there is actually an international day of remembrance for them. (Check out tdor.info). Sorry you are disgusted by women whose bodies don't turn out to be just the way you like them. I kinda thought punk was supposed to be about accepting ourselves and each other even though society doesn't accept us. Ditch the trans-phobia, it's not too late to be on the right side of history. (Heather) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, theridgways.bandcamp.com)

S.L.A.R.V. – *Skitsmak I Munnen Efter Att Ha Slickatc Pa Verkligheten!!!* – "Sounding Loud At Ridiculous Volume." Redundant, but accurate. A new-ish Malmö group that must include the vocalist of SKITKIDS. I can't confirm this, but it sounds exactly like him. S.L.A.R.V. actually has the same glorious frantic energy as SKITKIDS, but headed in a noisier pogo-oriented direction. While many bands produce uninspiring carbon copies, this is utterly enthralling from start to finish. I'll bet this band has other Malmö all-stars too. It destroys! Gonna listen to it a few more times now. (Matt) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, gluemanrekords.blogspot.com)

SATANARCHIST – *Making Threats At Punks Again!* – The art and titles suggest that this is kind of a joke band, but the music sounds very serious. It's metal punk. I don't have much reference for stuff like this, but it does bring to mind Dallas's GARUDA, whom I have very fond memories of seeing a lot after I graduated from high school. I hear bits of AT THE GATES too. So as you can tell, the musical bar is set really high. Favorite song title: "Rise Of The Morning Star...Farm Patties." (Matt) (7-song CD-R, lyrics not included, satanarchist.bandcamp.com)

SEM HASTRO – Brazilian fronted hardcore from DC, this is yet another great tape from Flophouse Records. The description from the label sums it up pretty effectively: "Eskorbuto meets Ramones meets Final Conflict" but sped up, all written during a six-month stint in the States this spring/summer. This has raw vocals sung mostly in Portuguese, some catchy guitar leads, and some really great rhythm shit. "Sem Vida" is a perfect midpaced pogo number. Supposedly this band will continue on in Brazil, so hopefully there's more to come. Really cool project! (Shit) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, semhastro@gmail.com)

SESSOVIOLENTO – *Mindfucker* – A metallic hardcore tape from the UK. Tempos range from breakdown slow, to black-metal blast. The guitar tone is a bit on the grungy side and the vocals come out in a snarly howl, but have a restrained feel. Tonally, the overall result is fairly dull, and the metallic undertones don't fully come through because of that. Pretty much a flat-liner. (Matt) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, yamabushirecording.com)

SHARK TOYS – This band name makes me think of the movie *Jaws*. I watched *Jaws* with my folks when I was four or five years old, and was too afraid to leave the armchair at the end due to the irrational fear that the shag carpet on the living room floor would transform into ocean water and the razor-toothed villain would chomp me in half. This tape's jangly garage punk pierced by chilling synth-lines has the completely opposite effect. I know that sounds potentially "by the numbers," but I actually find their songwriting to be pretty cool and unique at times. (Matt) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, dead-beat-records.com)

SILENT ERA – Melodic hardcore is a rare thing to come by and I'm always intrigued when vocalists of this genre choose to sing instead of scream, because screaming hurts the throat. Their singer Michelle does a great job at navigating the songs, which are chaotic in a thoughtful way. Fans of ARCTIC FLOWERS and STREET EATERS will love this. (8-song cassette, lyrics included, silenterabayarea.bandcamp.com)

SNOOZER – It's a big gamble to name your band SNOOZER. They play '80s-style indie rock / college rock and their singer sounds like a dead ringer for Mac from the first couple of SUPERCHUNK albums. The comparisons end there though. SNOOZER plays more noodly-type guitar hooks that are reminiscent of, but less technical than GOOD LUCK. Good stuff. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, ranchrecords.bigcartel.com)

SPETSNAZ – Noise punk for the initiated and ignorant alike. Formerly CRIME ZONE, SPETSNAZ is the continuation of 3/4 of LIFEFORM making raw, bombastic pogo/crasher punk supplemented with Partisan's songs (not the punk PARTISANS, but the "actually killing Nazis" partisans) as well as musings on human cloning; hail Dolly and such. I am extremely biased here, but to be fair this is directly up my alley: noisy hardcore punk and fascism studies are part of my day-to-day life interests. I'm not saying this is for everyone, I'm just saying it's perfect to my ears and downright shaming me that SPETSNAZ is already this good. Lyrically you can get a picture from the titles: "Crazy Fucked Up Miserable Life" and "The World: My Prison," but it's the pogo finish to "Stained Weapon" that gets me every time. (Shit) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, spetsnazpdx@gmail.com)

THE CHICKENHAWKS – *Bike Gang* – This band of weirdos plays '50s and '60s style rock'n'roll in the vein of EDDIE COCHRAN and the VENTURES. The instrumentals are so VENTURES-centric that I feel like THE CHICKENHAWKS could be sued. Their songs are done well but are fraught with rock clichés, which makes every song predictable. Reverb for days! (Greg / Mike) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, thechickenhawks.bandcamp.com, 104 Central Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11206)

THUMBSCREWS – *Life is Pure Joy* – Despite being a solo studio project, there's a lot of variation here: opens with some creepy soundscape noise and goes straight into some fast and mean hardcore that verges on powerviolence at times. There are some great plodding rhythms on the latter half of the tape too. Overall this is a cool release out of Providence that seems to be very limited, so good luck grabbing a copy. For fans of negativity. (Shit) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, conoredmunds@gmail.com)

TORTURE RACK – *Medieval Mutilation* – Portland's TORTURE RACK play classic Swedish death metal: no melodic, no symphonic, think early GRAVE maybe. Deep growls and downtuned guitars with little fussing around with leads. A good contemporary comparison is the Bay Area's own NECROT. This kind of stuff rarely gets into my hands via the *MRR* demos box, but I'm happy to have it. (Shit) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, headsplitrecords@yahoo.com)

UNIFORM – *State Laughter* – My first thought when I put this on was "Oh fuck." Angry and straightforward hardcore from Atlanta, GA that taunts the listener in the best way possible. The opening track "Euphoric State" gets repeated listens by this reviewer and is probably one of the best songs I've heard all year. *"I live in this world but this world don't live in me."* Listening to this now on bandcamp does the tape no justice, so your only choice is to get it or miss out. Comes in a really nice package, too. This is the soundtrack to burning cop cars and fucking shit up. (Vanessa) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, uniformatl.bandcamp.com)

URANIUM CLUB – *The Minneapolis Uranium Club Band Performs Human Exploration* – I am into the DEVO Midwestern-freak aesthetic of this; maybe I'm not looking hard enough, but I want to have more of it my life. Choppy, sharp, borderline-angular, weirdos in the garage. If they came to the Bay Area, I would hope to see them play with YI and UZI RASH, or any Max Nordile band. (Pat) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, $5ppd to Teen Man's Penthouse, Ian Stemper 3204 3rd Ave S, Minneapolis MN 55408)

VIDEO FILTH – This is some maniacal USHC outta Boston. Gruff vocals over some hard '81 riffs played through a chorus pedal. Good amount of noise on this, but what I really love is how much hiss comes off the cymbals on the recording. Boston keeps delivering top-notch shit and this is some of my favorite stuff yet. Members of GASH, NEGLIGENCE and SADIST. Highly recommended. (Shit) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, napalmthrash@gmail.com)

WALPURGISNACHT – *Vergheldinghens Crachte – Oh shit!* Okay, heads up this black metal band just started their tape with a *Labyrinth* sample of Hoggle anguishing over the bog of eternal stench. If that isn't a sign of the over-saturated hipster black metal project, I don't know what is. And I loved hearing it, so don't get me wrong. WALPURGISNACHT hit all the cues from the old trailblazers of the northern sky to sick modern audio engineering. From the ripping microphone barks, to the bestial eardrum destruction that imperfectly tumbles over itself like any great black metal recording does. This is louder than loud into SATYRICON-style melancholy. Discordant, maniacal mid-tempo sinister romps. I have to recommend this for the modern grimski. (Jason) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, deathculturetapes.bandcamp.com)

YOU SAY I'M SCUM – *Death Biter* – Very distorted instruments with very clear vocals hardcore, blast beats with INFEST type vocal pacing. Lyrically it is angry and pointed at Earth's problems, and not only includes the lyrics, but full explanations as well. The cover features a beautiful ageless punk in bondage gear asleep or possibly dead. My favorite of the songs is "I Don't Fit." It has a VOID feeling to it. (Mike) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, letsgodosomecrimes.com)

V/A – *Another Subculture 2* – Ben Perkins is back with another great account of all things punk in London. Over the course of 80 minutes you get interviews with UV RACE, Richard Phoenix from the Constant Flux label (great!), RAKTA, S.H.I.T., DAWN OF HUMANS, NO FORM, and other folks, including a guy who got his ear nearly torn off in "the pit." Ewww.... The A-side has great selections from bands like, SNOB, WITCHING WAVES, PERTTI KURIKAN NIMIPÄIVÄT, MONOTONY, and more. Side B is focused on the Static Shock Weekend fest, complete with interviews of the aforementioned bands, live clips, and chats with other fest-goers and friends. This is so cool—not only as a current snapshot of punk interests through one guy's eyes, but as a document of a time and place that will always hold value and meaning. To top it all off this project remains a benefit for DIY Space For London. A project genuinely worthy of the punx' support, and a really great listen! You can get it digitally on bandcamp, too. Please keep them coming! (Matt) (80 minutes of interviews and songs, no lyrics but lots of info, $13 ppd to USA, anothersubculture.bandcamp.com, Malicious Telecommunications c/o Ben Perkins, 2 Claude Road, London E10 6ND, UNITED KINGDOM)

V/A – *Droppings Fanzine* – This tape accompanies issue two of the Atlanta-based punk fanzine *Droppings*. I don't have the zine, but I will say that this comp reflects very highly on current punk in Atlanta. Lemme give you the rundown—PREDATOR: infectious upbeat garage punk. NURSE: blazing hardcore with maniacal vocals. EVAPORATED BRAIN: effective CELTIC FROST worship. WASTE LAYER: fastcore with interesting twists. RAPTUROUS GRIEF: like CONFUSE playing powerviolence. DEATH DOMAIN: like something from one of those minimal synth coldwave comps. SLUGGA: raging fast snotty punk, not unlike S.H.I.T. RYAN DINOSAUR: plodding distorted garage punk. CHEAP ART: tight fastcore. MORUS: bouncy pogo garage punk with swagger. NECROLUST: raw metal with a dash of grind. EEL PIE: '70s rock à la THIN LIZZY. I officially intend to pay more attention to punk in Atlanta. Into this. (Matt) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, scavengerofdeathrecords.blogspot.com)

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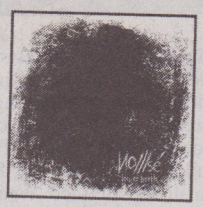

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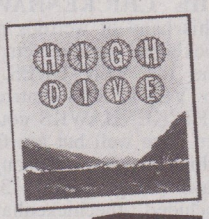

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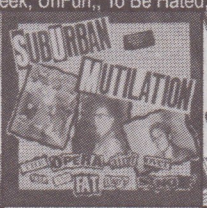

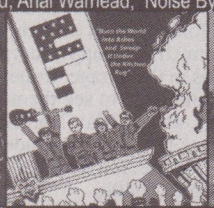

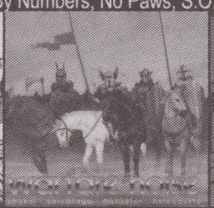

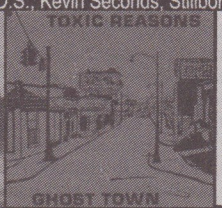

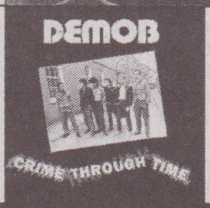

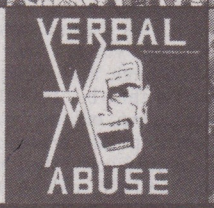

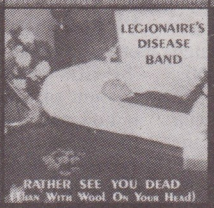

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Hopefully I don't have to tell you that Japan has one of the craziest punk scenes in the world. Some of the best punk comes out of Japan, and in my opinion Japanese punks look the coolest of almost any rockers out there. This photo zine of all Japanese punk art is no exception to how cool looking their scene is. There is some album art, but the majority of this zine is flyers for gigs. If you want to look on in lust and jealously and feel sad that you'll probably never get to see most of the bands whose names are littered throughout this zine, then you should definitely get your hands on one of these. It's mostly flyers for Zyanose, Framtid and Defector, but other notable bands make some appearances. There's not really much else to this zine, besides it's just seriously fucking cool looking. (KC)
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CHARGE #10
22 pgs
File this under: my new favorite zine. *Charge* from Italy reminds me of the fanzine *Distort* but with a lighter feel. Written in equal parts Italian and English, there are several interviews with bands I've never heard of and the layout is super punk. Punker than *MRR*. There's also a write-up on '80s and '90s Siberian punk, with a spotlight on Yanka Dyagileva and Grazhdanskaya Oborona, so if you're still foaming at the mouth from issue #376 of *Maximum* you should send away for this. The editor states that after ten months of hard work (and crying), they hope the reader appreciates their efforts. Well I definitely do. Great work! (VX)
heresiarec@hotmail.it / ebolaultracore.splinder.com

DROPPINGS #2
$5 / 24 pgs
A zine made with an impeccable taste in music, great design and great content. I couldn't ask for anything more! At its second issue, Atlanta-based *Droppings* is putting out interviews with Una Bestia Incontrolable and Ken Prank of the always amazing Prank Records, where they get into a deep conversation of the process of how Prank got started and where it is now. This zine included reviews from some great records that came out in 2014 (really Top 10 material stuff) and created a review system of bullet points including the most important things to know about these releases. Included in the zine is a twelve-song compilation! Total winner in my book; all zines take notes. (OG)
scavengerofdeathrecords@gmail.com

DYNAMITE HEMMORHAGE #2
$7.00 / 84 pgs
Jay and the gang return with the second issue of *Dynamite Hemmorhage*, impeccably crafted, researched, and *curated*—when I use the most worn-out word of the early 2010s, I mean it! In case you missed Issue #1, our editors and spirit guides are Jay Hinman of such fanzines and weblogs as *Superdope* and *Agony Shorthand* and Erika Elizabeth, who you may know from the crucial bi-weekly radio show/podcast *Expressway to Yr Skull*. Required listening, and for the second year running it's required reading.

This zine has been tremendous in bringing our attention to sick bands from all dark corners of the earth, but I've also appreciated their methodology in looking beyond the bands to other outposts in this subculture surrounding "sub-underground rock music." Where the last issue situated this punk-musical history alongside the histories of the short-run fanzines working tirelessly to spread the word across the inky pages on a semi-monthly/annual/millennial basis, this issue features interviews with some of the compilation series that send stacks of obscure records into the punk canon. To that end, we get an extensive interview with Tim Warren, compiler of the *Back from the Grave* compilations of '60s punk and basement loser garage. It's a fascinating interview. The maniacal dedication it takes to track down some of these mostly-dead bands to arrange for fair compensation—an all-too-frequent oversight—and drag them back into the record producing world is still alive in Warren, who's been in the game for over thirty years now. Jay also interviews the team behind Soul Jazz's *Punk 45* compilation series, a revealing look at some newer prospectors at the not-yet-tapped gold mine of lost punk singles. Always great to get an interview getting at the music from another angle, a lot of insight into the art of compiling and curating records as well as seeing what's become of the creators of the finest trash rock of the last five decades.

A lot of great band features in here too: highlights include a career-spanning cover interview with Bill Direen of fringe New Zealand bands Vaccuum, the Bilders and nearly a dozen of their offshoots, as well as a breakdown of overlooked-yet very ill and essential female-fronted punk bands spanning 1977-1993 across the globe compiled by Erika. Issue #2 also includes interviews with Philadelphia-by-way-of-Indiana Tascam rockers Honey Radar; Sydney,Australia noise-pop charmers King Tears Mortuary; Memphis punk superheroines Nots; and even a spread on Jay's ten favorite dub reggae records. The 33-page reviews section includes all the blast-from-the-past reissues, future classics and present-day obscurities from all corners of the

earth, including my new two favorite bands out of the southern hemisphere, New Zealand's CIVIL UNION and LOS CRIPIS out of Buenos Aires. *DH* #2 also features book reviews that occasionally overlap with the musical focus of the magazine, though subjects do stretch all the way to early childhood education, Karl Ove Knausgaard, and the Montreal Expos. Highly recommended to punk nerds, garage hoarders, and bookish weirdos of all varieties. (EW)
dynamitehemmorrhage.com

FLABBYDAGGER #7
£4.00 / 24 pgs
UK comic zine, this time with a sci-fi theme crossing over into sex, i.e. alien faces on cockends, Spock fucking his own brain. I like the "Idea Wars" story on the artist who's got writer's block then takes 'shrooms and hallucinates seeing Alf. The art in this story is really good, especially the panels where the artist is trippin' which reminded me of Gilbert Shelton's work in *The Freak Brothers*. "6094 A Space Odyssey" is another neat story with protagonist Alex James going to the 1990s planet. I really liked the attention to detail with the Brit-pop band logos in this story. Other stories and art seem influenced by Johnny Ryan and Mike Diana's mix of gonzo sex and grossness, which I coulda done without, but otherwise this is a pretty neat series of short comics. (JD)
flabbydagger.bigcartel.com

FREEDOM ISN'T SAFE & SAFETY ISN'T FREE
Donation / 8 pgs
This is part of the *Mission Mini-Comix* series, a semi-regular publication released by a collective of San Francisco native artists. The comic zine is a manifestation of multiple thoughts, frustrations and actions against gentrification and state violence, amongst many other issues concerning San Francisco. This edition of the zine focuses on the violence against the homeless in San Francisco with regards to ordinances and actions taken by the police and other authorities. I was not aware of many of the things being discussed in this zine; as always, this series is specific with the problems it is addressing and leaves the reader with discomfort that can easily be turned into action. I love this zine, and I love this series wholeheartedly. Keep it local, homies. (OG)
missionminicomix.org / minicomix@gmail.com

GREIX #4
€1.50 / 34 pgs
This is a fantastic punk zine from Benissa, Spain written mostly in Spanish with some Catalan sprinkled here and there. Benissa is a small town in the province of Alicante, and it seems that Jaume, the creator of this zine, is responsible for putting it on the route of Spanish punk tours for bands like Absurdo, Frau, Vertigo, and Siega. He reflects on the ups and downs of being part of a small-town punk scene (something a lot of us Bay Area transplants could perhaps relate to from our pasts), lamenting being one of the few punks in Spain who did not get to see Los Crudos on their Spanish tour in May, but overall taking pride in his village roots and creating something there. *Greix* contains a really vibrant mix of interviews, record reviews (Spanish bands like Suicidas but also North American ones like La Misma, Institute, and Pura Manía), personal reflections, comics, and drawings. Not only did I learn a lot about punk bands from lesser-known-about scenes like Valencia and Alicante, but also I felt like I got to know the author and that we could have a good conversation. Learn Spanish, read this. (LT)
Jaume Ivars, Sant Nicolau 8, Benissa 03720, SPAIN

ICON FACTORY #1
?$, free, trade / 24 pgs
Often priceless-ness connotes a sense of desperation, a fear of rejection, some sort of uncertainty. In this case I'm fairly clear it's more of a, "I did this for me, you can check it out, whatever" vibe. There is a question mark *before* the dollar sign, signifying much of what this zine is asking. What are we doing? What's it for? What value can I assign to it? Who cares? They have a killer aesthetic with many intriguing line drawings of punx in their natural habitat: spiky, disheveled, crossed out eyes, spiraling halos, darkness, geometric flailings, flying hearts and daggers, and everything much cooler than I just described. There's the void of blank pages just gleaming in the background, so understated, yet then everything is floating. Also: they do this fucky thing I'm really into where they've photocopied various generations of cell phones but either hand wrote the "text" or just superimposed Christian iconographic bullshit into the screens and beyond. Plus: how did I not yet mention the 'tude?! Topics of colonization, appropriation, artistic artifice, dumpster walks, etc… Glistening, seething, somehow at once very articulate and argumentative while retaining a sense of juvenile binder-drawings / wonder / inclusivity / mystic sensitivity, and "fuck it, maybe this is all just some shit." I can't even name it, I just love it. (JB)
5303 Ch. Côte-Saint-Paul, Montreal, QC H4C 1X3, CANADA / malhenrikno@gmail.com

INFINITE RIFF! #1
72 pgs
Infinite Riff is a thick, pink East Coast summer in zine form, a collaborative and (mostly) local effort from Providence's chubby queer punk underground. The theme is seasonal it seems and this issue focused heavily on the *heat*. It's full of comics, doodles, reviews, and some creative writing from a number of sources. It's full of style and there are *two* (count 'em!) comics detailing the woes of summertime chub rub. This was summarily enjoyed while drinking a beer in my underwear and listening to a UXA tape that Francesca made me. Just the way it should be. (EC)
Witch Club, PO Box 29335, Providence, RI 02909 / katrina.s.clark@gmail.com

I REMEMBER HALLOWEEN
48 pgs
It's been a few years since the last *I Remember Halloween*. We're treated to a sizeable issue with local and overseas content. Interviewed are Philippine bands Execution of Terror and the 20-plus year old Aggressive Dog Attack. ADA provides a discography and their take on playing "sponsored" shows. Editor Dane writes up various places he's been scoring records in the greater Manila area, including a place (a guy's house) where you gotta go at 6am, otherwise traffic is too much, and a gig review from 2012. Some flyers and photos appear. Also interviewed is Israel's Not On Tour, who go into the current political situation there. From the USA there's Masakari from Cleveland, OH, who discuss why Americans come off as racist when receiving technical help over the phone; Olympia, WA's, RVIVR, who talk about their requests to play with bands containing women; the guy who started but no longer runs Tee Pee Records; and a review of a Negative Approach show in Chicago in 2012, which gets hectic. The music reviews are heavy on Philippino CD-Rs. Overall, this is another strong and informative issue I feel lucky to have gotten. (JM)
PO Box 1504, Quezon City CPO, 1155 QC PHILIPPINES / iremember halloween@gmail.com

NARCAN SAVES LIVES!!!
Donation / 8 pgs
A tiny info-comic on the ins and outs (no pun intended) of the overdose drug Narcan (naloxone) from the people who bring us Mission Mini-Comix. While this publishing powerhouse usually tackles consumerism, crack smoking rats, and gentrification, they've moved in a more proactive direction with this little guide. For those who aren't in the know, Narcan is a drug administered either with a syringe or nasal spray that can help save people who are experiencing opiate overdoses. If you're not located in the Bay Area, a simple internet search should let you know what the laws regarding Narcan are in your state/locale and maybe even guide you towards a place where you can get trained in administering it to those in need. Check it out! (EC)
missionminicomix.org / minicomix@gmail.com

ORGAN GRINDER #4
$7 / 26 pgs
This is fucking great. The whole thing is mostly a bunch of puzzles. No, no… keep reading! Really cool puzzles, like guessing if quotes came from Chuck

D or Charles Darwin, identifying actual culturally insensitive sports mascots, a badass crossword, a state-by-state beer laws picture map, "Hitler or Hotdog," comics and so much more. This could've been put together in half an hour by a preteen with a computer and a printer, but it's pro as shit (with a few ads) and hilarious. It's a little pricey, but would definitely entertain a gaggle of punks on a road trip. Solid! (DZ)
organgrindermagazine.com/kungfujimmy@gmail.com

ORGY OF ONE
10 pgs
This is actually a booklet of lyrics from a band that existed back in 2009/2010 in Spain called Orgy of One. They played hardcore punk and from the few tracks I could find online, seem to have been female-fronted. Lyrics are pretty emotional, dealing with gender inequalities and the struggles contained with that lived experience. This is one of those instances when you don't know if it's a zine or not—like with the Body Betrayal handout I got at one of their first shows, they had no merch but were handing out little zines with their lyrics and some art. It's a really cool concept, which lasts longer than the band. (AP)

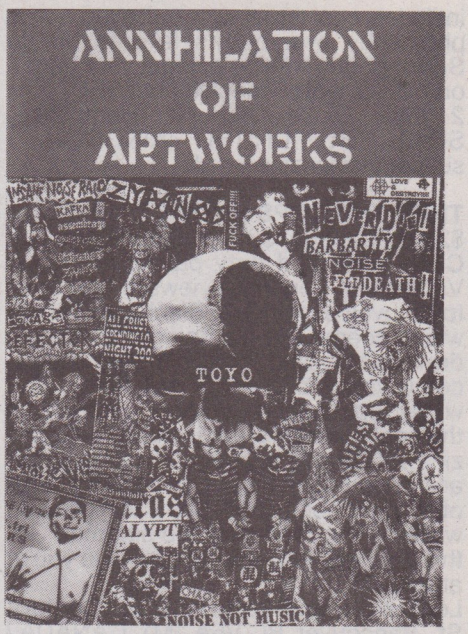
THE OUTSIDERS Vol. 2, Number 1
€8 / 72 pgs
Really wide-ranging French (and some English) language zine that covers Finnish rockers Pera and the Dogs (a side-band of the Hurriganes), and ten Italian punk records, which includes a few bands I've never heard of. Plus, a huge article on punk in South Africa 1977-86 which also connects to the interviews with Wild Youth, National Wake, Red Army, and the Mods. There's also a good feature on Cambodian rock with great images of LPs and an unnamed live band from the era. There're other interviews with the Zip (a Tokyo modern, uh, "mod" band), Canadian Oi! band the Prowlers, and Polish Oi! band Glory Days. While most of these interviews are also in English, I still wish my French was better to read the rest. The interview with skinhead photographer Derek Ridgers is also interesting, as it covers his experiences, both positive (and sometimes negative) in covering people in the photos. Finally, the music reviews cover everything from punk to reggae to soul and garage. (JD)
Seveon, 16 Bd de Strasbourg, 75010 Paris, FRANCE / eflammimaro@yahoo.fr

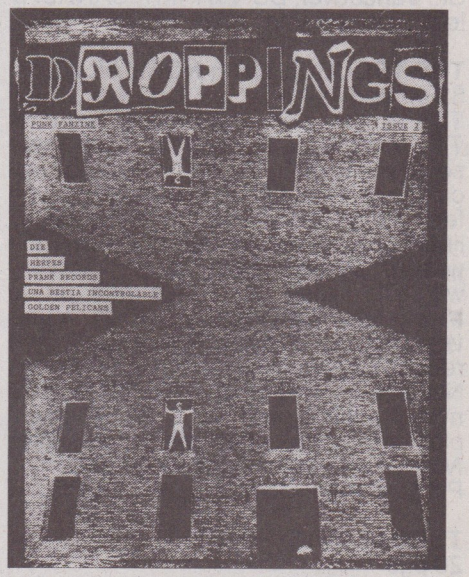
QUEENS OF CHAOS Vol. 0, 1, 2
32 pgs
This is a review for the first three editions of this women-in-punk focused collective from Milano, Italy. Vol. 0 and Vol. 1 are primarily in Italian but Vol. 2 is in English. This zine is old-school. There are collages, comics, critiques, essays, lists, and anti-advertisements with themes mostly focused on anti-oppression and its intersection with punk. There are printouts of lyrics of punk songs that are meaningful to the Queens, such as "Suggestion" by Fugazi and "Wrong Way/One Way" by RVIVR, both among my favorite songs. The edition that is in English also features a primer on important terms for anti-oppression beginners: gender identity, patriarchy, cisgender, queer, and more are covered. I was particularly smitten with their definition of privilege as "when you think something is not a problem because it's not a problem to you personally." The aesthetic is classic and it's wonderful to see that zines like this are still being made and circulated. (DV)
queensofchaos.tumblr.com

SLINGSHOT #117
free or postage / 16 pgs
Every issue of this radical quarterly raises my spirits, while also increasing my despair. The paper's known for its myriad of voices (some around for years, many not), the diversity of issues addressed, and the wild, artistic aspect to the layout. Recurring themes for winter 2014 are the struggles against sexual assault and how to keep your head on straight while working for a world which, uh, generally trends the other way. As always, local and global political and environmental issues are examined. They review books and zines, including the memoir of a Berkeley agitator. *Slingshot* folds out to be huge, so there's a wealth of information. If possible, send them a bunch of cash so you can subsidize and distribute this necessary work. (JM)
Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley, CA 94705 / slingshot.tao.ca

THE STUDENT INSURGENT Vol. 26, #1
30 pgs
Political newsletter put out by the student group of the same name at the University of Oregon. This issue's theme is the asshole issue and you can find everything from calling out assholes in anonymous letters to articles on how to stop being an asshole and actually take care of yourself, as well as lots of poetry including a long poem about how to get rid of bedbugs. Future emergency toilet paper for intentional housing co-operatives. (AP)
studentinsurgent@gmail.com / uoinsurgent.blogspot.com

SUSPECT DEVICE #56
£3.20 / 32 pgs
This zine has been around for thirty years, I guess on a bi-annual schedule. This is their 30th anniversary edition, which is pretty cool 'cause it's full of testimonials of people saying, "I remember when this rag first started…" and reminiscing on the good old days. However this whole issue isn't stuck in the past, there are interviews with: Las Otras, the Pukes, No Marks, Replica, and a Hard Skin tour journal. There is a recurring questionnaire throughout the zine that asks old timers about how they got into punk and how they think punk has changed, among other things. This also





includes ecord reviews and even some photos by everybody's favorite Martin Sorrondeguy—if you can get your hands on this it's worth checking out. (KC)
2 Pine Close, Ashurst, Hampshire, SO40 7BU UNITED KINGDOM / suspectdevicezine.co.uk

THEN THE COPS SHOWED UP #4
$2 ppd Canada, $3 world, trade / 10 pgs
Cool, quick and dirty punk zine out of Vancouver. Legs interviews a couple of folks involved with the Black Lab venue, which seems like it's doing cool things, draws a "do's and don'ts of house shows" comic that's cliché but still funny, and writes up a song-by-song synopsis of the cool mixtape she's included with this zine, which has a lot of current hardcore and poppy punk bands, and the first side of which is songs on tapes she picked up while on the road over the summer. Get this, and make a new penpal while you're at it. (DG)
Legs c/o Piano Forte, 627 E. Cordova St., Vancouver, BC V6A 1M1, CANADA / legs5016@hotmail.com

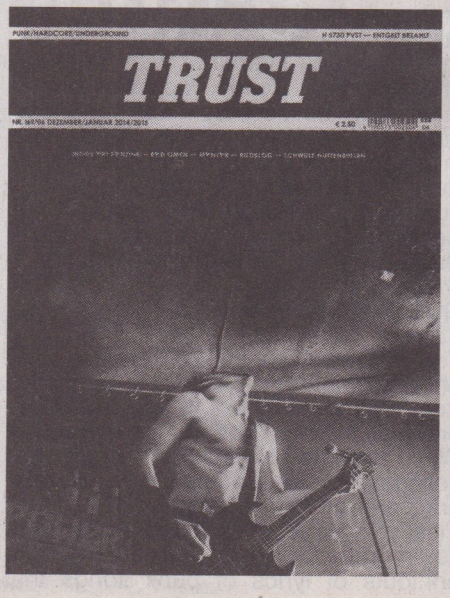
THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #127
$2.00 ppd / 40 pgs
This is the 22nd anniversary issue of *The Trouble With Normal*. There are some really cool, in-depth show reviews complete with pictures that make you feel like you were at the show, funny little show narratives that put you in the writer's shoes. There is an interview with Carnivores At Grace and an In Memoriam for Missouri rock music veteran Lou Whitney. There are some record reviews and some thoughts on November's mid-term elections. A good mix of politics and music, it's always a pleasure to see what *The Trouble With Normal* puts out into the world. (KC)
PO Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205

THROAT CULTURE #15
26 pgs
The only thing I know about Chico, CA, where this zine is from, is that my friend was conceived there and it's a terrible college town, but the editor of the zine makes it look cool! Heavy on album and zine reviews, I think this person needs to move to the Bay Area and take over my job 'cause their reviews are really refreshing to read and the layout is sloppy in a good way. There's a rant on why they dislike bar shows and a thing about how they repaired their broken bike. If you need some enthusiasm in your life, *Throat Culture* is here for you. (VX)
Gonk Publishing, 2700 White Ave. #3, Chico, CA 95973

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #252
Contact for price / 30 pgs
Another month, another issue of *Toinen Vaihtoehto*. This issue seems to have a longer show / record / zine / video review section than normal, and it's towards the beginning. Aside from that: interviews with Better Not Born, Empowerment, Masquerade, and a Jaakko & Jay tour diary. Really wish I knew Finnish. (DG)
PL. 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland

TRUST #169
€2.50 / 64 pgs
The December/January issue of long-running German fanzine *Trust* features interviews with *Inside Art* Fanzine, Bildblog, Pinoy punks Bad Omen, German punks Schwule Nuttenbullen, and half-German, half-Turkish sludge band Mantar. All this background information is of course based on my own limited research, as all the content within these elegantly laid-out glossy pages (aside from a handful of book/zine reviews) is in German, of course. Open advertisement: I will trade bass lessons for German lessons. I should note this issue's back cover is a simple statement in large block print that may translate easily to just about any language: "FUCK X-MAS." (EW)
Postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, GERMANY / trust-zine.de

WHEN WE WERE KIDS
$5 / 36 pgs
This comic is a collection of three slice-of-life, coming-of-age comics by Andy Warner. It's not about punk culture/ themes so much as about teenage interactions. Some drug use, like they're supposed to be trippin' in the first story or something, and there's beer and weed in the second and third stories, but they aren't the focal point. Some of it could be based on autobiographical stuff, but each story has different characters in it, and I'm not familiar enough with Warner's work to know if each story is part of a longer serial, or self-contained. It seems like there's more going on under the surface, but you never quite get there. The characters get developed a little. If the stories continue, or are part of a larger body of work using the same characters, then maybe more ends up happening. He does a good job on gray-scaling (My boy said he was hella feeling the half-tone filter used in this comic), and on background work/details. Warner's definitely got the chops for illustration, and "cinematography." Some digital effects are used, not sure how much clean up and detailing was done in post, but looks professh. This comic is definitely on more of an alternative tip than underground. My homie also said Warner's style is like Daniel Clowes stuff, only with the faces drawn well. The type of storytelling itself is a little *Ghost World*-y too. If you like subtle and meandering character-based fiction, told from the perspective of fifteen-year-olds, where not that much happens over the course of the story, then this is your book! (MR)
andywarnercomics.com / andy@andysaurus.com



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